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RELIGION AND MODERN INDIA.

(With an Introduction by late Sir N. G. Chandavarkar)

BY

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PUBLISHED BY
ASUTOSH DHAR,
Asutosh Library,
39/1 College Street, Calcutta.

1923.

Rs 2/8

To be had at :—

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39-~~4~~, College Street, Calcutta,
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PRINTED BY R. M. DAS

AT THE

Asutosh Press, Dacca.

DEDICATED

TO

DR. P. K. RAY, D. SC. (LONDON)

AS A HUMBLE TOKEN OF REVERENCE
AND GRATITUDE.

PREFACE.

This work is mainly based on my lectures delivered on various occasions at the Theistic Institutions in Lahore and Dacca. It incorporates some of the papers which were originally published in the Indian Messenger and the Dyalsingh College Magazine. Besides, the first lecture appeared as an article in the Modern Review and the last was printed and circulated by the Reception Committee of the 24th All-India Theistic Conference held at Lucknow. All of them however have been more or less modified or enlarged. My best thanks are due to the Publishers of these papers in their original forms. I am under a debt of obligation to my friend Prof. P. K. Guha for helping me in the correction of proofs.

JALSUKA }
Sylhet.

S. C. Roy.

IN MEMORIAM.

While presenting this volume before the public, I cannot help feeling with a sad and heavy heart the inestimable and irreparable loss that the book has suffered by the sudden death of Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who was himself an embodiment of the ideal upheld in these pages, and was good enough to honour this humble work of mine with a valuable Introduction. It is impossible for me to give adequate expression to the deep debt of gratitude I owe him for the keen personal interest he took in my manuscript and for the words of appreciation and benediction with which he introduced the book to the public. It will ever remain a matter of infinite regret to me that owing to unavoidable circumstances the volume could not be published before the death of Sir Narayan in May, 1923, although he was kind enough to send me the Introduction and the Manuscript during the last week of November, 1922. As my revered patron did not live to read the proof of his own Introduction and to see my work in print, I take the liberty of publishing the last two letters of his in connection

with the manuscript, as they possess for the public a biographical interest and for me a sacred association :—

(1)

“Dear Mr. Roy,

Your letter of the 1st. inst. I have been these two months reading your Mss. with care, in fact studying it for the purposes of the Foreword which you have invited me to write. The Mss. has been by my side and I have delayed writing the foreword because by careful study of what you have written I want to get to the heart of it and try to make my foreword both concise and clear, which is not an easy thing to do. I hope to send the Mss. with the foreword by the middle of December next.

yours sincerely,

N. G. Chandavarkar.”

(8th November, 1922.)

(2)

“Dear Mr. Roy,

Here goes along with this enclosed my Introduction for your book on “Religion and Modern India”—17 pages type-written. I am not sure it rises to the level of your book but I send it for what it is worth and what use you may think you ought to make of it...With all my good wishes for your success.

I remain,

yours sincerely,

N. G. Chandavarkar.”

(24th November, 1922.)

It is not however a personal loss that we have to mourn. By the death of Sir Narayan the whole of India has lost a great political leader, an eminent thinker, a distinguished scholar, a powerful writer and an eloquent speaker. His genius was displayed in many fields of our national life and activities, and a mere enumeration of the various offices he held during his life-time is enough to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of his vision, breadth of his interest, and depth of his patriotism. He was a successful lawyer, Judge of the Bombay High Court, President of the Bombay Legislative Council, Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University, Chief Minister of Indore, President of the Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, President of the Students' Brotherhood in Bombay, President of the Depressed Classes Mission, General Secretary of the Indian National and Social Conference (1901-8), President of the Social Reform Association and the Social Service League, President of the Bombay Beggars' Relief Committee, Editor of "Indu Prakash", Delegate sent from India to England to educate public opinions in view of the General Election of 1885, President of the Indian National Congress (1900), Chairman of the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association.

I cannot do better than conclude with a tribute to his character and personality in the words of the Editor of the Modern Review (June, 1923) :—

"In our country, the habit of looking upon human life as an organic whole, began in modern times with Rammohun Roy. He thought that for the regeneration of India, reform was necessary in all spheres of life—religious, social, moral, educational, political, economic etc. His life was in harmony with his conviction. In the Bombay Presidency, Ranade, Telang and Agarkar and others held the same view of reform as Rammohun Roy. Among our contemporaries Sir Narayan was the most eminent representative of this school of thought in that Presidency".

"The spring of all his activities was to be found in his faith in God. Of all the associations and institutions with which he was connected, he attached the greatest importance to his connection with the Bombay Prarthana Samaj as its President. He was of a devout disposition. He could not but have thought that its work was fundamental and essential for national progress."

"Sir Narayan was a man of wide culture and up to date in his studies."

"He had the greatest respect for the spiritual heritage of the Hindu race, and combined in himself Eastern and Western culture."

"For the fact of his having been a very busy man it might be natural to conclude that Sir Narayan was a dry, machine-like man. But...he was the exact opposite. We found him genial, affable, kindly and affectionate to young men and women."

"It was because he was very methodical and punctual that he was able to do so much work in so many capacities."

"The poor, the lowly, the backward communities always found in him a steadfast friend, who was anxious to play the part, not of a patron dispensing favours, but of a loving elder brother. He loved to enter into intimate converse and communion with them.... he did not like such disparaging names as the untouchable, the depressed classes, the Criminal Tribes etc."

August 3, 1923.

S. C. Roy.

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INTRODUCTION.



No time could perhaps be more propitious for the publication of this book on "Religion and Modern India" than the age we live in. The main thesis of the book is the supreme value of religion to nation-building. It is not India only but all civilised countries are more or less confronted now by this religious problem. The late war in Europe has laid bare the weakness of modern civilization and people are now asking :—"What is the use of it all—of political reform, economic progress, and scientific discoveries—if nations are to live only for mutual exploitation and jealousies?" Materialism has been tried in a manner it was never tried before in the history of the world and has been found wanting. All serious and thoughtful minds in every country, whether in Europe, America, or here in India, are turning to and longing for a spiritual life as the only true cure to the evils to which civilization has led as the result

of the state-craft and economic ideals of the nineteenth century. When these ideals were in their bloom of youth, Tennyson in his *Locksley Hall* "saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be", and sang :—
"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay". But now—nearly a century after that—Mr. Bertrand Russell writes in his *China in Transition* that the Chinese are more happy than the nations of the West, and he ascribes that to the ethical character of the national life of the Chinese, free from the rush and roar of the Western life and ideals. So staid a newspaper as the *Spectator* of London with all its narrow vision of the East reviews that book sympathetically, as if there is some force in Mr. Russell's view of the "sleeping East" as contrasted with the "go-ahead" Western nations.

In this state of things one is reminded of a remark said to have been made by the German Statesman, Bismarck, nearly thirty years ago. As the reader is aware, Bismarck was the German Chancellor during the greater part of the last century. He strove hard to make his country a formidable power among

the nations of Europe. He steadily used all his talent for that purpose and he succeeded for the time being in his policy of what has earned for it the character of "blood and iron." In his days and under his *regime* Germany rose to be a first-class power in Europe. She was able to dominate all critical situations. But when later Bismarck was turned out of power and office by the German Emperor, now in exile,—when, to borrow the words of *Punch*, which have become familiar in that connection, the then Kaiser, wishing to be his own master in guiding his ship of state, "dropped the pilot",—Bismarck took to country life and lived in retirement. In a letter to his wife thence written he observed that after all that statesmen, Governments, and nations do and can do, there are certain "imponderables in the air" to upset it all and teach man that there is something higher than the cunning of state-craft to determine his destiny and the fate of nations. The last war has brought that ancient truth to the minds and bosoms not only of all serious thinkers but of even the man in the street. The "imponderables" have worked after all, and given the

verdict for the age. Religion for the salvation of civilization and nations seems to be coming once again into its own, as the crying need of the day.

Both the Title and the author's Preface of this book show that he has written it for the special behoof of his countrymen. He calls the book "Religion and Modern India." In our ecstasies of patriotism we pride ourselves on India as a *spiritual* country, which has by its religious faith and ancient traditions refused to hitch its aims and aspirations to mere materialistic gospels. We are prone to point our fingers of scorn at the secularism of the West. But how many of us stop to enquire the nature of India's spirituality, the call it makes on us in the performance of our duties and the regulation of our lives, private or public? Are we taking any steps, and, if we are, the right steps, to build our country's future on that rock of spirituality? It is all very well and nothing is easier than to disparage other nations and their civilizations as materialistic and praise our own as spiritual. William James in his *Psychology* (Vol. 1. Page, 214)

observes that it is one of "the strangest laws of our nature" that many things with which we are well satisfied in ourselves disgust us when seen in others. With another man's bodily 'hoggishness' hardly any one has sympathy—almost as little with his cupidity, his social vanity, and eagerness, his jealousy, his despotism and his pride." We find fault with Western civilization because of what are thought to be its defects in point of the colour-bar, and racial distinctions, its exploitation of the weaker peoples and its worship of money and material wealth ; but we forget that in our own country we by our conduct stand condemned in the eyes of God and Man for sharing these defects in our treatment of our own countrymen and in our spiritual, social and economical relations. When we contrast the *spiritual* side of a civilization with its secular, we have to bear in mind that the true contrast rests in the fact that the *spiritual* embraces what Psychologists as well as mystics term 'the widest social self,' leading man in the actual intercourse of life to deeds, not mere words, of love and sympathy for all creatures. That

alone is the real, because enduring, mark of civilization and nationality. A people is spiritual by so much as in practice regulates its national and individual life by that royal law which has found its aptest expression in the words of St. John: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His *spirit*."

A French *savant*, who has won world-wide fame as an Oriental scholar, was reported a few months ago in the newspapers to have remarked in the course of an address delivered to an audience at Bombay that India had not cultivated the spirit of world-humanity, which the Western nations have developed. If he meant, that our religion had not inculcated it as Christ has, the remark is not just. Mr. Roy has in this book described concisely but clearly the service rendered so far as it went by the Vedas, the Upanishadas, the Bhagavad Gita, Buddha, and our saints, to the cause of the brother-hood of the human race—"the federation of the world." 'That God dwells in all, that we

share His *spirit*, that the fruits of that spirit are best shown when we love and serve one another selflessly, and when we not only forgive our foes but win them by loving deeds of kindness—this is also the cream of India's religion. But the question is not what a religion teaches in its best precepts and scriptures as how much its followers practise of what is taught,—whether there is a persistent striving across the successive ages for the steady, though slow, realization of that ideal in the main current of the general life of the people as manifested by their religious, social and political arrangements and their concerns of the hearth and home. Judged by this test, what right have we in India to sit in judgment on Western civilization and beat the big drum about in praise of our 'spirituality'? That spirituality is hidden for the most part in the jungle of our Shastras—its vital force on our lives is weak. The Japanese are after all not wrong in saying that our scorn for the western civilization betokens "the despair of a defeated people."

Roughly speaking, the present attitude of

the people in India towards religion may be stated shortly as follows :—The bulk of the masses, ignorant and illiterate, are steeped in ignorance and superstition. They are in a sense religious—their lives of patience, quiet suffering, calm and content are exemplary and we owe it to the saints of the *Bhakti* school who flourished in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries and tried to impart to religion some savour of democracy in India. But what have we done to carry forward that work of our saints and extend it to the whole life of the people in the adjustment of our social relations? What are the higher classes doing to raise the vision divine of the lower—that is, the masses? Educated Indians may be divided into three classes : (1) those who go the old orthodox ways—whose religion is one of forms rather than of active well-doing ; (2) those who are agnostics and are content to live a moral life without a belief in deity—with whom religion is a matter of expediency and utility, to be used for political ends because it is only by working on the religious beliefs and superstitions of the masses that

politicians of this class think they can obtain their purpose, and bring in the reign of democracy and win *Swaraj*. Lastly there are those who believe in one God and think that religion in India should be restored to monotheism, that faith in one God and the brotherhood of men alone can weld the peoples of India into the unity of a nation. But this last class is numerically very small—its influence has been that of a cry in the wilderness. In that respect Europe has juster ground for carping at us than we have for carping at the West. The West has been striving and struggling : we go the old ways and mumble “spirituality.”

• Mr. Roy is a member of the Brahmo Samaj as am I. In this book, as becomes him and his faith, he pleads for Brahmoism, as the needed religion for India. In writing on “Religion and Modern India” it is perhaps difficult for him and also for me to detach ourselves from fervour for that faith. But in these days when every civilized country is feeling that civilization directed by materialistic ideals, and divorced from the spiritual has been played out,—when men and

women in the midst of the political and economic upheavals of the age are hungering for food for the soul, for something higher than mere satisfaction of the appetites of the body,—Mr. Roy is rendering useful service by taking our minds back to Raja Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, and Brahmanand Keshub Chunder Sen as the true sons of India with the vision of seers and prophets, who, soon after India had been brought into close and immediate contact with the Western races, discerned the need of a spiritual life as the basis of a sound, enduring nationality. Raja Rammohan Roy was no dreamer; he was not an ascetic with contempt for the world. He was a true nationalist because he saw clearly that India's rise and salvation lay in reconciling, not separating, the spiritual and the secular—reconciling them by a wise direction of the secular activities by the light of the spiritual. He preached the true *Vedānta*; that God dwells in all and that caste, ignorance, insanitation, fetters on the rights of women, were all deviations from the true line of religion laid of old. It is a trite,

nevertheless true remark, proved by history, that a people, who have gone on for centuries discovering great truths of life, fall because and when they cease to strive to live by these truths. "We needs must love the highest when we see it"—or else the truth becomes a fiction, though it may be paraded in prayer, worship and in theory. When some one said to Pascal: "How much I wish I could believe your creed," Pascal is said to have replied: "Live my life, and you will learn to believe my creed." That is exactly the essence of what Raja Rammohan Roy and his two successors in the leadership of the Brahmo Samaj aimed at and strove for by founding and working for the Brahmo Samaj. "Learn and practise to live by the best of and in India's ancient creed—know its essentials viz. one God, one humanity, love for all, and build your future on that eternal rock of religion. Then enduring nationality will assuredly be yours." That in substance was *their* creed for India—it embraced in itself the sure foundation of sound politics and sane economics. Is not that which the harassed soul of a distracted Europe is now

crying for when they advocate a League of Nations, Disarmament, and so forth? If India is to avoid the pitfalls of modern civilization and save her growth in politics from its degradation, it must hitch itself to the cardinal principles of the spiritual life evolved from the Vedas, the Upanishadas, Buddhism, and the Bhakti school as represented by the the Bhagawad-Gita, and adapt modern conditions to them as our lode-stars of nationality.

These cardinal principles form the pith of the last-named of India's scriptures. The main doctrine of the *Gita* is *Yoga*, concentration,—life to be effectively useful and humanizing must be concentrated on a purpose which is itself humanizing. In short, life must have an ideal, a purpose, and that purpose must be *sublimated* by the ideal being *joined* to it steadily and the ideal being pursued with unwavering faith as the goal. That concentration on the ideal leads to man's *fitness* or *Yogyatā* for any great achievement. There are three paths for its pursuit—(1) the path of action, called the *Karma-mārga*; (2) the path of knowledge, the *Jnana-mārga*; (3)

the path of devotion or love, the *bhakti-mārga*. All these three should combine for the pursuit. These three paths mean *action, thinking and loving* or in other words, *body, mind, and soul*. All these three natures of man make the whole of his nature ; where the body acts without the other two, man is a mere animal ; where the mind acts without the rest, he becomes a mere dreamer ; where the soul works without the body and the mind actively used, he becomes a recluse, a hermit committing moral suicide. He must become *fit* for the life eternal by the work of this world and that he can be only by *Yoga*—the joint action of his body, mind and soul harnessed in unison to an ideal. What is the ideal to which they should be harnessed ? The Universal called *Brahma* ; and that is God. As the *Gita* in substance preaches :—
“Harness yourself to the Universal, the particular as part of it is then realized of itself. Become the whole man—not body, or mind, or soul only but all three fitted into one another and rendered musical so as to yield the harmony of life—the spiritual man, the spiritual nation”.

Now look at the extent of the influence which that principle has till now exercised on the life of India. To it we owe the doctrine of *Peace* or *shānti*, defined in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as 'steady concentration on God, abiding faith in Him (शमोमन्नितता बुद्धेः)*'. Taking up that definition, the Maratha saint Dnyaneshwara, whose poetic gloss on the *Bhagavad-Gita* is fitted for a mine of practical thoughts and suggestions for India's nation-building, expands the idea of the definition and explains *peace* to mean not the *passive quiescence*, not the negative quality of sitting silent in the face of wrong and suffering it as the doom of fate, but the active virtue of well-doing by loving and serving not only one's own friends but also one's own enemies. The word *Shanti* or Peace has for ages become in India the word of prologue and epilogue for our prayers, our worship and all ceremonies. The tradition that Parashurama, one of the twelve incarnations of God, destroyed the *Kshatriyas*, the caste of warriors—what is its moral but this that India, taught by the chant of Peace, learnt that war is a curse,

* *Shamo mannishthatā buddheh.*

militarism a ruinous policy for a nation—that he who conquers and rules by the sword falls also by it? Take as another result of that national chant of peace the doctrine of *Ahimsā paramo dharmah* (abstinence from injury to others is the highest religion). Darwin has somewhere said that kindness to animals is one of the latest moral acquisitions of civilized man. India acquired it ages ago—before others. The League of Nations is now trying to make it the chant of Europe. J. H. Fabre, the French naturalist, who devoted his whole life to the study of insect life, is said to have contracted, as a result of that study, feelings of sympathy and brotherhood towards insects as if they were like himself human beings. He was filled with “pity and wonder”, and “at the root of it all, a true fellow-feeling”. So writes a biographer of Fabre’s. And we have Fabre’s own words:—“The more I advance in my studies, the more I scruple to torture or destroy any creature in the city of God”. That reads like a chant from our Indian scriptures.

Then turn to the spirit of monotheism which forms the key-note of India’s spirituality,

in spite of its forms of idols numerous and idol-worship. That "God is One without a Second," is the incessant and unequivocal strain of the Upanishads and the Bhakti school. The man in the street is of that faith, however much he may, as he does by his worship of idols, stray from it. Ask the most illiterate villager, who adores some image as his deity, and his answer is: "God dwells in man's soul and is one." And, above all, there is the outstanding fact of Indian life that, as has been remarked by several European writers, the average man in India believes in and talks of the immortality of the soul in a manner which would have startled and put to shame the average man of ancient Greece in the times of Socrates.

And yet with all this, these truths of the spirit evolved in the Upanishads and sought to be propagated and made current coin by our saints have had no *vital* force on our individual and social lives. As remarked by the Maratha Saint, Dnyaneshwara, in his work already referred to—"Just as a farmer earning his living by cultivation of land extends his cultivation by tilling one land to-day, another tomorrow and so on, accord-

ing as it yields him profit, so men, leaving the worship of One God, worship many gods, and run after one idol to-day, another tomorrow. Men hate one another but love idols. Man is indeed by nature disposed to the worship of one God, but through ignorance invents many gods and goddesses and so men live divided and distracted."

It is upon the best of the national ideals evolved since the time of the Vedas down to the time of the Bhaktas or Saints, from the highest ideal—one God dwelling in all, that Raja Ram Mohan Roy sought to build up the new national life of India. He saw that India's unity amidst its multitudinous castes with their multiplying subdivisions could only come of a national life based upon the religious life—faith in one God without a second.

Thus India's fall from the best of her ideals is due to the fact that we have neglected the body and the mind in dreamy search for salvation of the soul. Europe's present condition on the other hand is owing to the neglect of the soul in search for satisfaction of the body and mind. We have cultivated more

the life of the ascetic ; they have more the life of the athlete. In either it is a case of the relative emphasis and a case for shifting the stress but at the same time clinging to the call of religion. The problem now is, whether for Europe or India, how to harmonize the pieties of asceticism with the power of athleticism. The doctrine of Renunciation or *Nirvana*, which as the result of Buddha's teaching, has become the gospel of India, has been misapplied and misunderstood. As one of our saints (Tukaram) has put it, true *Nirvana* means not the extinction of the self and its desires but forgetting one's own petty self by merging it in the Universal Soul, which is God, and directing desires by His will. Of that life the lotus, the national flower of India, he cites as an example. In the midst of dirt and other impurities, the lotus grows and shines, opening itself to the skies above, lives its life of beauty and purity—the *glory* of God—meaning by *glory* the life of the spirit. When the politician as a patriot speaks of living for his country and dedicating himself to its service unselfishly, does he not mean that he merges himself in some thing more than and

besides his own self ? But what is his country but a compendious name for the individuals who form its people ? But love of one's country, service to one's people is a means to an end. The end is the humanity and brotherhood of the human race. That end is secured by religion.

The *Nation and Athenaeum*, a weekly newspaper of London, edited by Mr. Massingham, a well-known publicist, referring to the troubled state of Europe due to the materialistic ideals and practices which led to the war, wrote three years ago : " It is thought that there is some antagonism between the spiritual life and the intellectual. But spiritual life is impossible unless you have a map of the country and clear eyesight. The spiritual life is not a mere inward state. It is an outward conduct. And there can be no right conduct without vision. It is no use meaning well unless you have the intelligence and knowledge to do well. This is true of nations as of individuals." That diagnoses correctly the disease of Europe and India at the present day.

Democracy is in the air here in India as in

Europe. The man in the street is the gospel of the day. *Vox populi vox dei*. Is the volce of the people to become the voice of God or of the Demon ? That is the political problem vexing statesmen now.

In an address to the Conference of the Governors and Mayors at Washington delivered in 1919, Dr. Woodrow Wilson, who was then President of The United States of America, remarked that "the business of the government is to take the counsel for the average man", and that those who carry on that business "are the servants of this great silent mass of people." That remark was made with a view to emphasize the outstanding feature of politics in this age that the masses as the democracy have come into power and that no government can govern which does not take account of that fact and administer its affairs accordingly. At the back-ground of that political remark lies the spiritual fact that though the average man is not by nature the equal of those considered higher in the ranks of life, in point of education or position or property or intelligence, yet he is their equal in so far as his spirit is.

with all his ignorance responsive to the tremendous dialects and audacious logic of religion. He can rise to height of character, heroism and saintliness. The man in the street as well as the man of culture can feel that he lives not by bread alone and that wealth and power can be flung away and yet he can be rich in spirit. When we read in Victor Hugo's novel of the Bishop, who, when he discovered that his butler had stolen his silver plate, not only forgave him but also presented him with more costly articles, we feel as if such magnanimity not only betokens an unpractical mind, unfit for the prosaic and daily life of the world, but that it is not true to life but only fit for the pages of fiction. But an English soldier, fighting for his country in the late war in France, who had read the novel and cast it aside as a fable, wrote to his mother from the trenches, how life there stood to him revealed for the first time as beautiful on account of the call for self-sacrifice and service, and how the act of the Bishop in the novel then presented itself to the prospect of his soul as true to life at its highest. When you have given away all you have,—when you

have forgiven a crime, an insult,—for the instant you may feel you have been weak, and acted unwisely: But think of it some time after and especially when you are by yourself meditating in the stillness of your heart, in such a life for instance as that of the trenches during war, when duty to your country requires your service and life ! How the act of the Bishop in Hugo's novel then stands out not only as the noblest in man but as proving that the human is a ray of the divine ! Neither political nor social rights of equality nor economic improvements will or can make men *equal*. Nature never intended that ; but she has intended all men to be equal in the possession of *good-will*. And that is the genuine democracy, which is founded on the Father-hood of God as Love and the brotherhood of men serving one another as His children. It is to that divine instinct in man that we must appeal if our political, social, and economic growth is to be safe and sound, and stable. Politicians who stake all their sense on their capacity as practical men, men of expediency, and treat religion as an affair of dreamers and theofists, are sooner or later caught in

their own cunning, as European statesmen were caught by the last war, when they use the masses for their ends by flattery or what passes for management. But no nation, no democracy, have long survived that play of politics. Expediency and opportunism are good or bad terms according as we understand and use them in life. Some one has said that there is no right government without a creed, no firm conduct without a philosophy. Man, whether according to the Bible, the Upanishads, or the New Psychology, is a creature of faith. Hence all depends on the kind of faith he lives by. When we speak of the voice of the people as the voice of God and of the masses as our master, and of ourselves as their servants, we mean that men are ruled by faith in life as a stage to the higher life, the Kingdom of God which is in us. That is the breeding and feeding ground of true democracy—the will to believe that every man must be made free to live the life of God, not of man's conventions. That faith fits us to be the true servants of the masses and to treat them not as pawns in the shifting play of politics but as made in God's image. It is

upon that that we must build India's nationality if it is to be healing and enduring. It may be a slow and tiring process—nations are not made in a day or a few years—but to him who sees that vision the prospect is clear because nationality is a spiritual cohesion, brought about by faith in God as Father and all human beings as brothers in Him and by the love that through Him binds us to one another by its golden chain.

That is religion and because the imperative need of it is beautifully emphasised in this book for India in these days of turmoil and distrust every-where, I venture to commend it heartily and humbly to all earnest lovers of my Motherland and to all faithful seekers of her spiritual riches waiting to be harvested.

KITTREDGE LODGE,
Cumballa Hill, Bombay. } N. G. Chandavarkar.
November 24, 1922.

I.

RELIGION AND MODERN CIVILISATION.

With regard to the question how religion and civilisation stand related to each other, the views maintained by the thinking minds of the modern age may roughly be brought under four classes :

(i) Advocacy of Religion and opposition to Civilisation.

(ii) Advocacy of Civilisation and opposition to Religion.

(iii) The view that both are necessary but antagonistic to each other.

(iv) Attempts at reconciliation, viewing the two as different manifestations of one and the same spirit.

Let us consider these four stand-points one by one.

I. The first view generally takes the form of idealising the past or the future, and condemning the modern age and modern civilisation as destroyers of morality and

religion. It conceives of an ideal state of society in the remote past when religion was the supreme factor in human life, when all the spiritual endeavours of man, science, art, morality, law and political organisation centred round the religious consciousness. In fact what goes under the name of civilisation is itself a child, which has been fostered at every stage of its development by Religion as by a mother. The sciences of chemistry, astronomy, geometry and the arts of poetry, painting and sculpture arose in close connection with the religious practices and ceremonies. The worship of ancestors, the priesthood of the king, sacrificial ceremonies, public assemblies in temples, consultation of auguries and oracles,—these and many other adjuncts of the religious belief marked the earliest beginnings of civilised society. All the details of human life were regulated by religious injunctions, which were afterwards compiled in legal codes or scriptures. One might establish this truth about the influence of religion on society by referring to the city fire and the Delphic oracle in ancient Greece, the spiritual conquest of half

the world by the Buddhist missionaries, the vast ecclesiastical organisation of Rome, and the vitalising activities of Christianity and Mahomedanism, spreading culture and learning, inaugurating moral and social reforms, helping the poor and uplifting the masses through cathedrals and mosques, monks and faquirs, poor houses and caravanserais during the ancient and the middle ages.

Modern civilisation, according to these votaries of religion, is guilty of patricide in so far as it is up in arms against religion, to which it owes its birth and growth. This crime of civilisation against religion is being avenged by Nature, it is said, in the materialistic tendencies of the modern age, as shown in the life of the peoples of Europe and America, in their physical view of human welfare as consisting of the pleasures of eating and drinking, of housing and clothing, bathing and sleeping ; their low view of morality which justifies cutting each other's throat, usurping the rights of the weak, depriving the neighbouring states of their liberty ; their application of the results of the sciences and arts to the

criminal end of robbing and killing each other, to the invention of the engines of 'destruction, reducing cathedrals and universities into ruins, to the exploitation of gold and silver hidden in the bowels of the earth from the more favoured countries, their degradation of divine philosophy into materialism, agnosticism, scepticism and atheism. With all their vaunted progress in science and civilisation, the sum-total of human misery on this earth has rather been increased than diminished, as proved by the existence of slums and the white-slave traffic, drunkenness and gambling, adulteration of food and dishonesty in trade, increase of litigation and crime, insanity and suicide, infant mortality and scarcity of milk, the frequent visitations of famine, plague and natural catastrophes. So these religious extremists call the modern age the *Kaliyuga* (the dark age), and constantly apprehending the approach of the day of judgment and the final dissolution of the world, they turn their back towards the so-called advance of civilisation and retire into the caves and jungles or into the solitary recesses of the inner life, and devote them-

selves to chanting and singing of hymns, to meditation and prayer with their eyes fixed on the Heaven of Eternal Life or on the Nirvána of Eternal Rest.

II. The other extreme of this one-sided thinking is represented by the votaries of civilisation, who openly confess their enmity towards religion. In the march of civilisation they find the growth of the power and the freedom of the human race, the widening of the sphere of knowledge, the triumph over the forces of nature, the vastness and the permanence of social organisation and what not. Look at the railway trains and the motor cars, the ships and the aeroplanes, the postal services, telegraphs and telephones ; think of the electric powers, the mills and the factories ; are they not unmistakable proofs of the superiority of the modern age ? Are we not making the seas and mountains, the clouds and the wind our slaves ? Are we not overcoming space and time, conquering disease and death and liberating ourselves from the tyranny of nature, and of the customs and traditions of society, with the

help of the numerous natural and mental sciences ? Is not modern civilisation raising man to the rank of God and driving the gods and goddesses into the regions of non-entity ? The religion that you so blindly adhere to is only a product of ignorance and superstition, a child of fear and wonder, a creation of the imagination and dreams, a remnant of barbarism, and is bound to disappear like darkness at the dawn of the progressive civilisation. Our anthropologists and sociologists are collecting materials which convincingly prove the crudity of the origin and the futility of the end of religion. Psychologists are engaged in analysing the phenomenon of religious consciousness and in finding out what percentage of the sense of dependence and the weakness of will must be combined with what percentage of nervous disorder and insanity to give rise to that infirmity of the old age, or that pathological state of mind known as belief in God. Political philosophers are coming forward with their defence of this poor client on the plea that religion has a utility for the masses in so far as it develops the altruistic virtues.

and suppresses the selfish impulses of man, so that even if there were no God, we must invent one for the sake of political expediency. These extreme opponents of religion base their views on a philosophical system, according to which matter and motion are the fundamental realities, human life is only an automatic machine, mind and thought are nothing but the dancing of atoms, the whole cosmic order is the outcome of the play of blind forces, pushing and jostling with one another, and man is the highest product of this world-demon or by far the most successful game ever hit upon by the life-force in the course of its age-long experiments. According to these thinkers morality can serve as an adequate substitute for religion and ethical societies should take the place of churches.

III. The third class of thinkers realise that both the views represented above have elements of truth, but recognise at the same time that these elements of truth can never be reconciled by human reason and shown to follow from one principle or to lead to the same goal. There is, so to speak, a funda-

mental contradiction in human nature, because of its belonging to two absolutely different worlds, one sensible and the other super-sensible. Man has an animal life on earth, which is dependent on the physical conditions and the laws of nature. Science and civilisation are concerned with the study of these conditions and laws with a view to improve man's earthly lot and as such they have certainly some claims on us. But man is also a member of the spiritual world, which is his true home, with which his eternal destiny is linked. Religion is concerned with this second aspect of human life, drawing our attention towards and preparing us for the hereafter. Hence it is that man finds himself at the mercy of two masters,—the world and religion, Mammon and God, science and faith, reason and revelation, both of which are essential to him, however impossible it may be to harmonise them. Those who accept this dualistic position generally divide their mind into water-tight compartments. When they are in the scientific sphere, they give free play to their reason, are acute in their analysis and

penetrating in their investigation, they would not accept a single proposition without proof and would confine themselves to the positive and certain relations of co-existence and succession. But when they enter into the religious sphere and put on their Sunday cloak, they are ready to believe in any nonsense and submit to all unreasonable superstitions, from the creation of the earth in six days to the ascension of the dead body of a Jesus. Their attitude towards these two spheres is therefore one of compromise. Here is the positive field of knowledge,—the region of ever-increasing light, let us be masters over it; there is the unknown and the unknowable, the kingdom of eternal darkness, let us bow before it; such is their supreme maxim of conduct.

But the human soul cannot rest satisfied with this dualism and inconsistency, and naturally seeks, for a unity. If it does not find this unity in a harmony or reconciliation of the apparently opposing principles, it must abandon one or the other factor of the opposition and thus identify itself with either of the one-sided and extreme forms mentioned under I and II.

IV. Hence the demand for a synthesis of religion and civilisation to completely satisfy the dialectic of human reason. I propose to attempt a reconciliation of the two.

Religion and civilisation, truly understood, have a common source and origin as well as a common end and destiny. Both arise from man's consciousness of bondage and finitude and both aim at the attainment of the soul's freedom or liberation and at its realisation of the Infinite. It is only in their corrupt and degraded forms that these two manifestations of the human spirit are found to come into conflict. The extremists of the votaries of religion and the extremists of the advocates of civilisation are each of them right in so far as they point out the defects and imperfections in the other, which result from an unhealthy and diseased condition of the latter, but they are equally wrong in so far as they ignore that there are also elements of infinite value on the other side.

If religion is at a discount in the modern age, it is not so much the materialistic civilisation of the day that is to blame. In fact, the term "materialistic civilisation" is itself

a contradiction in terms, for the two elements of this complex idea can never be brought together in thought. Civilisation can never be wholly materialistic, as it is always the self-expression of the spirit of humanity in art and literature, in science and philosophy, in social, political and economic life. In civilisation the spirit comes to the knowledge of itself, of its power and glory, through the conquest of matter and physical forces, rising above the laws of necessity and nature-determination, and moulding its own life as well as the life of the universe in which it dwells according to the ideals of Truth and Beauty and Goodness. Science and art, morality and religion are the constant companions of civilisation, for they are the various stages or processes through which the spirit transcends its finite character and realises its freedom in nature and society. Civilisation in this sense can no more be materialistic than religion itself. The spirit cannot work in vacuum ; it must either overcome, employ and organise material conditions, or reduce itself into an abstract idea, empty nothingness, and attain

Nirvana or extinction of life and consciousness through spiritual drill or gymnastic. That is why a religion which divorces itself from the world of matter and life, and occupies itself too much with the disembodied ethereal state of the soul beyond the grave, is in sure danger of losing its hold on the living world and of becoming a dead weight of obsolete rites and ceremonies, and a repetition of meaningless words, till it meets with natural death or decay and finds its honoured place in the museum of antiquarian researches. If 'civilisation' has become the catch-word of all idealistic and spiritualistic thinkers to-day, it is because they understand by it something more comprehensive and more real than the so-called 'spiritualism' of the historical religions, which are themselves the originators and supporters of the materialism of the modern age, in so far as they oppose all progress in science and civilisation. For, (i) while all other spiritual endeavours of man are moving with the march of times, religion alone refused to advance even a single step forward in response to the growing needs of the hour and rested

content with the so-called revelations made by God to a Prophet or Seer thousands of years ago. She accepted a Veda or a Bible, a Koran or a Zendavesta as the final word of God about the nature of man and of the world, about the history of creation and the destiny of human life. The followers of these historical religions would cling to the superstitious beliefs and erroneous cosmogonies of the scriptures against all the established truths of science, and retard the progress of knowledge based on a free and unprejudiced observation of, and experiments on the processes of nature and mind. (ii) Religions maintained a class of priests and elevated them into self-contained and self-sufficient aristocrats, who instead of studying the scriptures and practising a godly life, spread ignorance, propagated false doctrines, forced their selfish claims on a credulous laity, encouraged stereotyped forms and ceremonies, supported the principles of caste and inequality and thereby cut at the root of the communal life. (iii) These fanatic believers fostered sectarian narrowness and dogmatic claims to finality and

absolute truth on the part of one particular dispensation ; they generated mutual hatred and jealousy among religions and formulated elaborate codes of dogmas and creeds, stifling the liberty of thought, speech and action, which is man's in virtue of his spiritual descent from God ; they have blackened the pages of history by their impious persecution and burning of the martyrs who would not give up their honest convictions.

(iv) Religion divorced herself from all those fine arts and innocent enjoyments which make life holier, healthier and more beautiful ; she promoted anti-social and ascetic tendencies, which taught men to regard the world as an evil and the social relations as the bondage of illusion, turned him away from the home and family life, and led him to the opposite and far more destructive evil of other-worldness ; she was responsible for all those evils of impurity and dissolute life which necessarily accompanied monasticism and celibacy in most cases. (v) She produced in the minds of her followers on the one hand a craving for individual salvation which led to an egoistic spirit in all affairs

of earthly life, and on the other hand a deterministic outlook which naturally led to the inactivity of fatalism and quietism ; in either case, religion retarded social progress and civilisation.

All these elements which are symptoms of the corruption and the disease of spiritualism in religion have combined to bring about modern materialism, agnosticism and atheism.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the scientists, artists and politicians of the modern age have more of the truly religious spirit in them than the so-called missionaries, preachers and ministers who have made religion their special profession. Take for instance the case of the scientist, who is supposed to be as far removed from the sphere of religion as hell is from heaven. A scientific genius must learn to distinguish between appearance and reality, and go out in search of the Unseen, the Beyond, the Rational, which is at the same time the Real ; he has to dive beneath the surface of things, to transcend the finite standpoint and go beyond the regions of the senses, in order to

understand the supersensible. This however involves on his part the following features :— (1) meditation and concentration of mind on the essence of things, as divested from the irrelevant conditions and outer husks of phenomena ;—which may be compared to the attitude of worship or communion on the part of religious minds towards the Supreme Being ; (2) intense longing for the truth, earnest seeking after whatever may throw a little light on the subject of research ;—which resembles the religious man's habit of prayer ; (3) lifelong devotion to the cause of knowledge, sacrificing all the comforts and pleasures of life, forgetting the self and the world ;—which is akin to the practice of austere penances and asceticism in the religious life ; (4) again, if it is only the pure in heart that can see God, no less is it true that the secret laws of nature are revealed only to a holy mind, for Nature is a jealous mistress, and an exacting queen who demands absolute chastity and purity of heart, undivided love and attention, utter self-abnegation and self-surrender, before she admits any one to her inner chamber and lays

bare the invaluable treasures of her mysterious kingdom ; (5) lastly, the scientist's communion with nature is fruitful only so far as he moves with and not against the current of the spirit, i. e., so far as he goes in the direction of the natural flow of the spiritual life or 'vital impulse'; and this means that he must somehow be connected with the centre of the universe, have a deep insight into and comprehensive grasp of the whole, or in other words, the whole world must be reflected in his self. Hence it is that all scientific inventions are mere imitations of nature, all scientific discoveries are mere refindings of what is already present within us, and all knowledge is memory, as Plato said long ago. This brings us to the recognition of the important philosophical truth that nature and mind are one, the microcosm mirrors the macrocosm. Now, is this not also the beatific vision or the highest religious experience as described in the writings and utterances of the religious saints and seers ? Can we not identify the greatest scientific genius with the profoundest mystic in so far as both see the world in the soul and

the soul in the world? If such an attitude of the scientist towards reality is not religion, I do not know what else is meant by religion. The same might be shown to be true of the artist and the statesman. If religion manifests itself in the triumph of the spirit over nature, in the discovery of the unseen world of truth and beauty and goodness, in the participation by men of the omniscience and omnipotence of God, then it is just under the favourable condition of modern civilisation with its progress in science, art and good government that such a religion is evolving. There is a providential dispensation even in the distribution of scientific, artistic and political geniuses in the human race, and the moral government of the universe is so constituted that only those nations, in which the spiritual life of each member has reached a very high stage of development, can give birth to a number of seers and originators in science and art, so that physical and material improvements in a society, and the progress of sciences and arts in a nation are dependent on the progress of the spiritual life of that society or nation. Thus

the progress of civilisation means at the same time a higher degree of development of the spiritual principle or the religious consciousness in man. In this sense, a civilisation without religion or a materialistic civilisation is a monstrosity which may find a place in the imagination of some upstart in philosophical dabbling, but has certainly no claim to reality either in the history of human society or in the logical thought of metaphysics.

Such being the relation between religion and civilisation in general, it is worth while enquiring, in what special directions our conception of religion has been influenced and modified by modern civilisation.

(i) First of all, the modern age has taught us to distinguish the essential from the accidental features of religion, the eternal verities that are the same to-day, yesterday and for ever, from their local and temporal forms and accompaniments. We have learnt now that the essence of religion does not consist in creeds and dogmas, nor in the performance of certain rites and ceremonies ; it is not to be sought in a faith in heaven and

hell, where our virtues are rewarded and vices punished ; nor does it necessarily involve a belief in gods and goddesses, in fairies and angels ; it is not to be identified with "chanting and singing, and telling of beads," nor with the offering of meals to one's fore-fathers and the feeding of priests and saints ; nor does it imply regular attendance in a church or confessions and alms-giving with a view to make provision for the hereafter. No, the essence of religion must be sought elsewhere, viz., in a system of ideas and feelings which regulate the moral life of the individual as well as the spiritual life of society. As I have expressed it in another connection :

"Faith in a spiritual world beyond and above the visible world presented to our senses, and faith in a Just Being at the centre of this spiritual universe, the recognition of this supersensible kingdom as our true home, and of this Just Being as our Father,—these form the centre of religious system and the root of religious life, all other ideas and feelings being mere satellites around them. or mere fibres that are sustained by them.

Religion, pure and undefiled, lifts man beyond the region of shadows and appearances and translates him into a world where all the conflicts and discords, all the evils and enigmas of our life are reconciled and solved. It affords us the only means of communing with the Higher than the Highest and the Holiest of the Holy. It evokes in our heart the sublimest and deepest feelings of wonder, admiration and reverence, which give birth to science and philosophy, art and morality, hero-worship and devotion to prophets and seers. It inspires us with a faith unshakable in the ultimate triumph of justice, with a hope indomitable for the realisation of our best and highest aims and aspirations. It generates in us an idealistic view of life and things and lends us the moral force of a reformer and the large-heartedness of a philanthropist. Hence the love of truth, purity and freedom, the sympathy for and charity to men and animals, the care for the poor and the homeless, the blind and the cripple, the widows and the orphans, the relief of the depressed, the uplifting of the down-trodden, the resistance to evils in society, the tending of the sick, the

consideration for the weaker and gentler members of the race, meekness and submission to the universal will, the patient endurance of the worries and evils that cannot be cured, the ardent appreciation of all that is noble and holy even in our enemies, the forgiveness of and the reconciliation with the shortcomings and transgressions of our brethren,—which we find to be the constant companions of religious consciousness.

(ii) All the qualities of head and heart I have just mentioned as the necessary correlates or concomitants of religious life are at the same time the indispensable conditions for the evolution of human society and the essential requirements for the realisation of a higher spiritual life by the individual. Modern biology acquaints us with the law of evolution which governs the life of the individual and of society. The value and importance of religion according to the scientific minds of the modern age lie in the inculcation and cultivation by it of those virtues in man which enable him to go with the current of universal life and to rise higher and higher in the scale of being, passing from the stage of ani-

mality through the gate of humanity to the rank of angels till he realises his perfection in divinity. As Benjamin Kidd says, religion is the supreme factor in social evolution insofar as it makes the individual subservient to the needs of the race, and insofar as nature selects those races, in which the individuals of the religious type predominate, as the fittest to survive in the struggle for existence and eliminates those races which develop anti-religious and egoistic tendencies.*

Equally important is the part played by religion in the maintenance of the individual life, for it is the only medicine that can relieve us from the worries, cares and anxieties, from the fear and ignorance, the failures and disappointments, dangers and calamities that beset our earthly life. But for the faith, hope, love and spiritual idealism generated in us by religion, our life would have been unbearable. Religion is the staying power which maintains the balance and the equilibrium of the soul, keeping it always true to the centre of gravity which is in God, enabling it to fix its vision on the Infinite

* Social Evolution.

and the Eternal and thus to rise above the limitations of space and time.

This conception forces on us at once the recognition of the vital necessity of religion for the race and the individual in the biological sense, apart from its intellectual and moral necessity, which has long been realised.

We therefore need not trouble ourselves about the future of religion. The existence of the religious spirit cannot be threatened by modern civilisation, for religion is based on the adamantine rocks of reality and is one of the elemental forces of nature which govern human life and society. It cannot die even if we are indifferent to it. If it is neglected, civilisation will give place to barbarity, man will be replaced by animals ; the life of the human race will be extinct from our planet. Such is the verdict of scientists who know the limitation of their sphere and the impotence of mere intellect without religion.

(iii) It may be asked, are not the feelings of wonder, admiration, and reverence, faith in the triumph of justice, hopefulness, the idealistic outlook, love of truth, purity, freedom, sympathy, charity and so on,—I

mean, are not all these qualities, which are supposed to be essential to the life of society and of the individual,—possible without religion? Could we not be made fit to survive in the struggle for existence by means of morality alone? What then is the use of concerning ourselves with the transcendental world and asserting our belief in a Supreme Being? This question presses upon us to-day all the more formidably in view of the fact that the greatest world-religion viz., Buddhism, does not seem to attach importance to the existence or non-existence of a divine Father and also in view of the fact that many of the leaders of modern idealism and rationalism could lead an ideal life of purity, duty and public spirit without caring for God and religion. But, as I have already said, morality, art and science are alike manifestations of the same principle of spirituality and rationality in man, which reaches its highest culmination in religion. We cannot separate morality from religion, for the latter is the spirit that quickens, perfects and fructifies all those activities which are known to us as moral. A man who is moral is already

religious without his knowing it ; perhaps his ideal of goodness and purity is a truer substitute and representation of God than the idolator's visible object of worship made of clay or wood. No, in God's world, there is no atheism, although there are different ways of representing the faith in the spiritual principle according to the culture, the temperament, the surroundings, the age and the race of a man. By some, God is identified with Mammon ; to some the devil takes the place of the Deity ; for others, God is represented by a particular metaphysical theory or artistic notion or moral ideal. We can give so wide and comprehensive an interpretation to the term 'religion' as to include all these various classes of man's attitude towards Reality as different gradations of the manifestation of religious consciousness. From this standpoint, the moment a man sacrifices himself and his interests for a higher end, the moment he recognises his ignorance and impotence before an external world, which is independent of his will and which offers him resistance at every step, he is already pledged to the belief in God,

if he wants to be rational and consistent. In fact our God is revealing Himself in an infinite variety of ways, and training the most confirmed atheist in the most beautiful and sublime lessons of religious experience, by coming to him as his own father and mother, wife and child, and receiving his homage unawares in all forms of domestic duties, friendship and affection, virtuous practice and social service. So unless a man ceases to be a man and becomes a brute, he cannot escape being religious in some form or other, although the value of a man's religion is ultimately to be judged by the nature of the God he believes in or worships.

But we must go further and assert that without an explicit recognition of the specifically religious elements of our spiritual life, morality is sure to lose its hold on the mind of man and to meet with decay and death. This admits of proof by reference to the witness of history as well as to the verdicts of moral philosophers. For, (1) although many men of culture in modern civilised societies lead a good moral life without adhering to religion in any form,

yet it is undeniable that the advanced stage of civilisation, in which morality can stand unsupported by religion, has itself been brought into existence by long centuries of religious practices and teachings which began with the dawn of human society and were intensified by the rise of spiritual world-religions; (2) unless morality is sustained by the sense of one's own weakness and insignificance combined with a belief in the moral government of the universe and in a Power that helps us onward and pulls us upward, it runs the risk of bursting its own walls by a vague hankering for an unattainable ideal or degenerating into a refined form of egoism ; (3) it is in religious consciousness alone that man has an anticipatory glimpse of his origin and destiny. Man's thirst for the Infinite is at once the proof and the result of his bearing the stamp of his divine origin and the signet of his eternal life in the heart. In other words, religion is the light which reveals our own weakness and imperfection and thereby awakens in us the need of salvation or freedom from the bondage of the fleshy

vessel in which our spirit is likely to be absorbed, unless purified and elevated by moral and religious practices ; and religion is also the light that casts its rays upon the distant goal of our life in God, through the right adjustment of our relation to whom alone we can rise to power and glory and to freedom and joy. Hence it is that such thorough-going rationalists in the sphere of Ethics as Kant and Sidgwick found it impossible to systematise and rationalise our moral experiences without the help of the theological postulates of God and immortality.

(iv) Another important problem confronting the religious conception of the modern age is, how to reconcile the new facts brought to light and the new explanatory principles formulated by the scientists of to-day, with the old ideas of creation, incarnation, inspiration, miracles and so on, which are generally associated with religion. To answer this question would require more space and time than we can afford to spare for the present, but I shall try to indicate as briefly as possible the line of thought

along which the solution of the problem must be sought.

The indispensable minimum of religious faith which we can safely retain as incapable of being shaken by any advance of knowledge and which need not impose any limitation on the freedom of scientific investigation, may be expressed, I think, in the form of three propositions, which are of the nature of postulates, viz.—

(1) There is a Power behind phenomena, with an infinite knowledge and with a moral purpose, a just, holy, loving Being, best described as a Person, whom we may call our Father, without ascribing to Him the limitations which attach to a human personality. This conception of the Supreme Reality is common to all the higher religions and although not amenable to scientific proof, it is confirmed by philosophical speculations.

(2) There is a spiritual world, beyond and above the kingdom of nature, a world that is not in space and time and not subject to the mechanical laws, but is rather the supersensible region from which flow the

Ideals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, which are revealed to the seers and the prophets and the pure in heart and realised by them in the sensible world.

(3) Man as a spiritual being can enter into a relationship with this spiritual world and commune with the Supreme Being at its centre,—prayer and meditation being the means of communication between them.

In so far as the human soul identifies itself with God, it is inspired with the Ideals of the supersensible world and acquires supernatural powers. Such a man may be represented as a divine incarnation in the same sense in which the physical body of every man becomes an incarnation of an indwelling spirit during his life-time.

In support of these three religious postulates I may mention that even the most acute scientists and the most radical empiricists who are unbiassed by any religious prejudices and have approached the dogmas of religion with the spirit of free scientific investigators are now coming to recognise more and more clearly the existence of a guiding purpose and powerful mind behind

the world-machine (vide William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, L. T. Hobhouse's 'Development and Purpose' and Sir Oliver Lodge's 'Life and Matter') ; where-as the reality of the spiritual world and the infinite capacity of the human soul with regard to the realisation of its freedom in the world of nature are finding strong advocates among the leading philosophers of Europe, Eucken and Bergson. The progressive liberal religious movements throughout the world are also coming out triumphant after long years of fruitless controversies on 'Science *versus* Religion' and presenting before the scientific world the old concepts of religion under new forms, so that the ideas of Revelation, Incarnation, Inspiration, Miracles and Immortality are receiving new interpretations in their hands. And yet the modern religious man is far from claiming absolute finality with regard to the truths, which concern the details of the three general postulates of religion stated above. For example, the questions as to how the infinite Power brings into being and sustains the world, what His final

purpose may be, what the laws of His moral government exactly are, what form of life the soul will live hereafter,—these questions must necessarily remain shrouded in mystery and obscurity, till our sciences and philosophies attain a higher level of development, and till our experiences touch a deeper region of reality.

(v) Lastly, the question that naturally arises after these discussions is, which particular form of religion will survive the stress and the pressure of competition between thoughts and ideas, practices and institutions in the modern world? The answer ought to be evident to anyone who has studied the spirit of modern civilization aright. It is the religion which can ally itself with morality, art, science and philosophy,—the religion which has a clear vision of the future destiny of man in the light of the past history of his evolution, which will help man in understanding the laws of the development of human society and in gaining mastery over the conditions of his life and growth,—the religion which has a deep insight into the spiritual world and a compre-

hensive grasp of the whole reality,—the religion which embraces in its sympathy all the races of mankind and all the departments of human life and activity, the body and the soul, the family and the society,—the religion which aims at nothing less than the realisation of the divine will and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth,—the religion which is characterised by universality, catholicity, sociality and spirituality. This is the religion that is going to survive. The existing religions must all undergo greater or less transformation before they can become organically related to this world-religion. But sooner or later the transformation must come and then it will be realised that the small body of religious liberals in India and Persia, in England and in America, who belong to the Brahmo Samaj, to the Bahai movement or to the Unitarian Church, have already chalked out the path for approaching the new religion of the new world, and that the details of local and temporal differences apart, this universal religion had already been revealed in its frame-work to Raja Rammohan Roy, and

practised and elaborated by generations of mighty souls like Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen. Whatever name may be given to this future religion of the world, the religion of the Brahmo Samaj, the Bahai movement and the Unitarian Church represents its soul, its essence, its spirit. It is in these new religious movements of the modern age that all the important and valuable elements in the ancient historical world-religions of Hinduism, Muhammadanism and Christianity as well as the elements of universalism, liberalism and catholicity that characterise Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Sikhism in their purest forms, have found and are still finding their best expressions.

II.

RELIGION AND NATION-BUILDING.

National life is generally supposed to consist in a powerful and efficient organisation of the resources of a nation so as to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number of its members. Men, money and materials are supposed to be the ingredients of its progress. The programme of our cabinet ministers and practical politicians seems to be exhausted when they have made perfect arrangements for better housing, better feeding, better clothing, greater comforts and conveniences, greater ease and luxuries, entertainments and amusements for the citizens of their states. Sanitation, hygiene and medicine, invention of machines, discovery of the laws of nature, study of science which is a handmaid of civilisation,—these are thought to be the essential and indispensable conditions of national prosperity. Economic and industrial development, agriculture and commerce,

Imports and exports, banking and exchange, capital and labour, profits and rents and interests,—these are the *backbones of national life* and have become the watchwords of all earnest reformers and patriotic servants in the field of politics. Where is then the room for religion in national life? Religion, we are told, is concerned with God and the soul, with the supersensible and the hereafter, and has therefore little or nothing to do with national prosperity. If that is the case, I can imagine a young Indian student exclaiming within himself, let us banish religion out of the earth, bury it under the sands of the desert of Sahara, or drown it for ever in the abyss of the Mediterranean Sea or the Indian Ocean. But the witness of the history of nations belies this perverted view of the relation of religion to national life.

A nation is not a mass of individuals any more than the human organism is a cluster of cells, or a building is the same as a heap of ruins. History of a nation is not that of a mere struggle for physical existence any more than a man is a brute and nothing but a brute. Man does not live by bread alone.* He has

a soul which partakes of the infinity of God. Even the cobbler or the shoe-black who lives from hand to mouth aspires after the sovereignty of the entire universe and will grumble if he is made the monarch of half the world till he is put in possession of the other half; and all the financiers, upholsterers and confectioners of this earth combined in a joint-stock company will not be able to satisfy this cobbler for more than a few moments, for even the shoe-black has a *soul*, as Carlyle says. The same is the case with a nation, which is a spiritual organism and has therefore a soul. What is the *soul* of a nation? The soul is that which gives unity, co-ordinates the component parts of a whole, organises the mass of materials in a body, brings to a harmony or synthesis the various elements or members of a complex structure. It is something that imparts strength and stability, order and symmetry, to each and every limb or organ of the body natural or body-politic. It is, in other words, the principle of vitality, the formative energy, the creative activity in an organism. The soul is then the first cause as well as the final goal of nature, the ultimate

force as well as the final meaning and key of the cosmic process. The evolution of nature and society point to the soul as the directing and guiding factor, as the *nous* or the *reason* or the *purpose* in the heart of things. The soil of the earth realises its end in giving birth to vegetables, in adorning the barren rocks with the splendour and beauty of verdant green; the vegetable life fulfils its end in offering itself as food-stuff to animals; in the animal world again, every worm is crawling to be a man, aspiring to attain the height of its stature of perfection in the human soul. The soul is thus the final consummation of creation and the inner law and the destiny of all creatures. Hence the self-dedication of coal to give flames, of the earth to give forth vegetables, of the grapes to be pressed into wine, of rice and bread to nourish the human body with flesh and blood, of coarse matter for the finer products of thought. Applying this conception of the soul to the life of a nation, what should be our reply to the question as to the soul of national life? The answer of human history is unambiguous on this point. *The soul of a*

nation is to be found in its Religion, which is, so to speak, the cream churned out of the milk of life, and which connects all the individuals of a nation with a common past and animates them with the idea of a common future goal. According to the verdict of History, this soul or religion is the ultimate fact and the basic power in the growth and development of nations. Religions of the world have been prime factors and forces in the process of nation-making and nation-building.

(I) The people of Bháratvarsha, Aryá-varta or Hindusthán had begun to organise themselves in a well-ordered communal life and to develop national laws and institutions in the remotest period of Indian history. We read of the political struggles between the Aryans and the non-Aryans, as also among the various ruling races and the members of the same royal family, in the Vedic literature, in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and in the Puranas. The ancient civilisation of the Hindus gave birth to political science and jurisprudence of the highest type, and their national life under the administration of wise and just rulers showed signs of

vitality and energy in all directions as the natural outcome of plenty and prosperity, peace and security, of honesty and truthfulness, of optimism and joy in living, and the healthy spirit of inquisitiveness, leading to scientific investigations and philosophic meditations. But what is the centre, the essence, the supreme factor or the soul of these vigorous national activities and achievements of the Hindus? It is religion and religion alone, around which gathered their literature and poetry, their divine songs and prayers, their mathematics and astronomy, their positive sciences and philosophical systems, their laws and traditions. It was the holy altars with their sacrifices and oblations, the temples with their rites and ceremonies, that encouraged the various sciences and arts, and promoted the growth of botany and zoology, of medicine and anatomy, of painting and music, of sculpture and architecture. It was also their religious practices and performances that prepared the way for various crafts and industries, and for machines and conveyances that secured material comforts and happiness to the people. Then again it was the spirit of religion that

first revealed to the Hindus the vision of Unity, of one Brahma, one Atman,—the unity of God and the soul, which led to the conception of One country and one humanity as a necessary corollary, and formed the foundation of patriotism and cosmopolitanism, of national consciousness and international sympathies at the same time. Hence also the spirit of liberalism and catholicity and universalism, of love, charity and toleration, which characterise the Hindus even to this day. It is through the religious consciousness again that the seers of India attained the vision of the immortality of the soul and of the Providence of God, which form the foundation of the moral life and the social structure of the Hindus. For, it is the belief in the indestructibility of the soul and the continuance of life after death alone that can elevate a man above the fear of death, fear of public opinion, and of political law, and enable him to resist the solicitations of pleasures and to endure with fortitude the pains and sufferings of the world, to overcome all temptations and to fight against injustice, to embrace all privations and difficulties and to sacrifice all earthly ambitions and prospects. The belief

in the providence of God again has led the Hindu thinkers to a conception of the eternal and immutable law of Karma, which with the concomitant laws of rebirth and transmigration keeps the majesty of the moral order intact in the midst of apparent discords and contradictions of life, the sufferings of the just and the righteous and the ascendancy of the wicked and the vicious. There is still a third idea of the Hindus which owes its origin to their religious spirit and which has dominated the entire history of their national life, viz., the Divinity of man, as a corollary from the unity of God and the soul. We have not only the conception of ten *avatâras* or Incarnations, but every sage and saint, every Bhakta and Sadhu, every religious founder and moral reformer has been elevated to the rank of God-man. All these ideas have combined in moulding the national life and institutions of the Hindus. The national heroes of India are not like Alexander and Napoleon, like Nelson and Duke of Wellington, mere conquerors of lands or enterprising adventurers, winning fame by valour and prowess in the battle-field, but they are great-souled men like Janaka

and Ramchandra, Haris Chandra and Karna, Judhishtira and Krishna renowned for their wisdom and truthfulness, generosity and self-sacrifice, piety and perfection. The great national wars of Hindusthán, as described in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, were fought for the sake of establishing the *Dharmarājya*, the kingdom of righteousness. Religion was their supreme ideal and the ultimate issues were moral. The whole literature of the epic age is full of moral lessons, illustrating high ethical principles of the supremacy of right over might, and upholding the sublime ideal of *Yato dharmastato jayah*, wherever there is righteousness, there is victory, *Satyam eva jayate*, truth alone triumphs in the end. The secret of the national prosperity of the Hindus was their living faith in the Moral Government of the universe, and their practical observance in daily life of the distinction between the spirit and the body, recognising the supremacy of the former, from which necessarily followed as a logical consequence the superiority of the Eternal over the temporal, of the Life beyond over the life on earth. And paradoxical as it may seem, the decline in the national

life of the Hindus may be traced to the same moral, metaphysical and religious notions misunderstood and misdirected by the perverted intellect and sophisticated moral sense of interested priests and ignorant preceptors. However, enough for the Hindu period of the history of ancient India.

(II) Let us now turn to the process of nation-building under the guidance of religious spirit during the Buddhistic age, which is perhaps the most glorious period for the people of our country recorded in history. The achievements of our national life during the age were remarkable in many ways. We may call it the age of the first awakening of our national self-consciousness. India became conscious of her spirit and mission, and her sons and daughters went abroad to preach the gospel of love and charity. Thanks to the missionary spirit of Buddhism, practically the whole continent of Asia, embracing Burma and Siam, China and Japan in the east, and remote Syria and Palestine in the west, was brought within the sphere of its healthy and elevating influence. Nay, even Greece and Rome in Europe and Mexico and Peru in America were visited

by the Buddhist monks, according to the latest researches of western scholars themselves. The philosophical teachings of the Pythagoreans, the Gnostics and the Neo-Platonists were partly drawn from oriental sources, especially from the Indian views of things transmitted by the Buddhist preachers. One-fifth of the population of the world is still living under the spiritual sovereignty of India ; and the whole human race has been directly or indirectly influenced by the civilising and moralising power of Idealism which began with the movement for intellectual freedom in the Upanishads and ended in the protestant and non-conformist movement of Buddhism. For, it was an age of dissent and reform, the first of its kind in the history of humanity, and it is the proud privilege of an Indian to look back to a glorious past, and declare that it is in his own country that for the first time in the annals of history a great spiritual movement was inaugurated for the elevation of the depressed classes and for the emancipation of women, and a band of social workers devoted their lives in preaching the ideal of universal love and salvation for mankind from

one end of the globe to another. It was indeed a glorious bloodless Revolution, which was founded on the recognition of the reality of the *Moral Law* and the sovereignty of the *moral order* and set itself in opposition to all unjust and unreasonable fetters of Bráhmānical authority which tried to stifle the liberty of intellect and of conscience, and to perpetuate the tyranny of caste and slavery to priestcraft and ceremonialism. It was a great national movement for breaking the idols of custom and tradition and infallible revelation, and recognising instead the supremacy of reason and freedom, for breaking down the aristocracy of birth and intellect, of pride and prejudice, and upholding instead the higher cult of equality and fraternity, of toleration and philanthropy, of service even to lower animals and plants. Its mission was to give life to the dead body, to civilise the uncivilised, to educate the illiterate, and to reclaim the wild tribes of the hills and jungles. In order to make the sublime teachings of Buddha accessible to the masses, it began to preach in the people's language, giving thereby an impetus to the vernacular literature, as

against the favoured classical Sanskrit of the refined classes. It was thus pre-eminently an age of *democracy*, based on the divine right of the people. Nor was it indifferent to the higher developments of intellect and art. The vigour and depth of our national life during that age can be best comprehended through its outer manifestations in Ethics and Metaphysics, in architecture and sculpture. Politically the country was united under the great empire of Asoka, and we read of Bengali heroes conquering Ceylon and the East Indies. But as in the case of Hindu India, so in the case of Buddhist India, the decline of national health and vitality in the later period was mainly due to the fact that the fountain of spiritual Idealism was dried up, and religion degenerated into a lifeless repetition of meaningless words or mechanical revolving of the wheel of prayer, reverence for Buddha's personality being reduced to a degrading form of man-worship, and what is worse, of image-worship or idolatry, and the philosophical foundation of religion being shaken by the barren and hair-splitting discussions of sophisticated minds,

which finally led to the opposite extreme of atheism and nihilism, scepticism and relativism.

(III) Leaving here the story of the moulding of the Indian national life by the religious spirit of the Hindus and the Buddhists, let us now cast our eyes for a moment on the nation-making and nation-building processes and activities of the Islamic and the Christian religions which were subsequently to come in contact with our civilisation and to act and react on each other. I take the religion of Mahomet first, because our country was politically connected with the Moslem races long before we had any relation with the Christian powers. Islam has been a great power in the world as a nation-builder. Its protestant origin, revolt against idolatry and polytheism, and against the tyranny of false priests, had baptised its followers with a moral force from the very beginning. Its recognition of one God, without a second, who is to be worshipped in spirit, to be approached in reverential prayer and humility five times a day, and whose sovereign will is to be regarded as an

absolute authority and to be carried out in our life with unflinching obedience, whose providence is enforcing the moral law through rewards of the believers in heaven and punishment of the *kaffirs* in hell, who is manifesting His Laws for the guidance of mankind through a succession of prophets, of whom Muhammed is the best, the noblest, and the last, whose finger is writing on the pages of time the history of the rise and fall of nations in accordance with their conformity or otherwise to the Law of Righteousness, and who is revealing His infinite compassion and benevolent care of man through nature's bounty, through the sun and the moon, the rains and the clouds, through the green pastures and golden cornfields,—I mean, the recognition of such a God, had early inspired the believers with an unextinguishable fire of faith verging on blind fanaticism, and with an indomitable zeal for the spread of Islamic faith and culture. Their spirit of self-surrender before one just and moral Ruler of the Universe, combined with an austere moral purism, and sacred devotion to duty, gave a peculiar stamp of spiritual genius to the

Moslem races. While their faith in one Almighty God as the sovereign Lord of the Universe gives to their political constitution the character of a dogmatic and absolute *Theocracy*, their practical fulfilment in conduct of the commandment of God to treat all men as common servants of one Divine Master, and therefore as perfectly equal in the eyes of the law as well as of religion, makes the Moslems the apostles of a real liberal democracy. It is no wonder therefore that the religion of Muhammed succeeded in taming and civilising the wild Arabs and turned them into a well-organised and self-governing nation. It looks like a miracle indeed that these narrow, superstitious, idolatrous, self-centred people of the desert not only became the preachers of a pure monotheistic worship of one God without a second, but put into practice the sublime moral conception of a democratic Brotherhood of man, and even established a world-wide empire, extending from India in the east to Spain in the west, not by sword, but by faith. For, as Carlyle says, no religion can be founded on falsity, or insincerity, on brute force, or

selfishness. You can not even build a brick-house on falsehood, far less an empire, how much less a religious brotherhood. At the bottom of this Islamic empire, there were earnestness and faith, sincere belief in the Ever-lasting and Infinite Being, an honest attempt to realise His presence in the Universe of nature and of society, to carry out His will in daily life, in the affairs of the family and in social dealings, and also a candid recognition of the moral law, of the eternal reward of virtue and punishment of wickedness, in any case, of the inevitable *hereafter* awaiting us all. The foundation of the history of nations, no less than that of the lives of individuals, is secure, for there is a moral government, and therewith a just Ruler at the helm of affairs. The civilisation of the Arabs—which has given to the world a theocratic conception of political life and a democratic organisation of social life, which once dominated over a vast empire embracing all the three continents of the eastern hemisphere, and which taught the philosophy of India and Greece to the European nations during the dark medi-

eval ages—was therefore no accident in the scheme of things, but was only a vivid and clear exemplification of the law of righteousness working through humanity. The decadence of the Islamic races in their subsequent history may also be traced to the violation of the same eternal and immutable law, and to the consequent dying out of the religious fervour and the weakening of the spiritual faith.

(IV) The history of Christianity as a nation-building power is not less illustrative of the same truth. The laws of growth and the principles of development of the civilised races in the west and in the east are one and the same, and we shall find everywhere the unfolding of a Divine plan in the determination of the destinies of nations, the working of a purpose and a power that maketh for righteousness. The rise and growth as well as the decline and fall of the Hindu, the Mahomedan and the Christian nations are equally governed by the golden rule, "Righteousness exalteth a nation."

Christianity, like Buddhism and Mahomedanism, was a religion of protest, or of revolt

against an ancient religion of long standing and carried with it a dissent from the established order of things. The Jews, like the Hindus, could boast of a sublime religion inspired by a high ethical code, hallowed by age and sanctified by traditions. Generations of sages and Prophets had made them conscious of their own place in the world ; they were " the chosen race," specially favoured by God, and destined to be the rulers of the world at the advent of the promised Messiah. They had already passed through severe moral disciplines and distinguished themselves from the rest of the peoples of Eurasia by their faith and righteousness, by their worship of one God and opposition to polytheism and idolatry, by their insistence on the purification of the heart as against the blind conformity to laws and external rites. They had been struggling against the forces of custom and convention and wandering from land to land, guided by the beaconlight of God by day and the pillar of fire by night. But unfortunately they were fallen on evil days, and not only did they lose their political freedom but the spiri-

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tuality and moral fervour of their race also was gone. The religion of Israel had become a mere mechanical observance of rites and ceremonies, prayer had become an external superficial affair, a mere lip-service done more for the sake of show than of life. It was among this people and at this age that the founder of Christianity was born. Jesus Christ, like Buddha, was a Non-conformist or the inaugurator of a Protestant movement for reformation rather than the founder of an absolutely new religion. He came to fulfil the law, not to destroy it, as he himself said. His was a religion of spiritual inwardness, asking men to seek first the kingdom of heaven and to fulfil the will of the Divine Father, and insisting on the practice of meekness and humility, love and service of man. By a strange irony of fate, not only was this message of Jesus ignored and disregarded in his own land and by his own people, but he was persecuted and crucified at the instigation of one of his own disciples. This shedding of innocent blood and dishonouring of God's Prophet seem to have been the cause of the

extinction of the Jews as a nation, for along with the crucifixion of Jesus, who was claimed by his disciples to be the long-expected Messiah of their scripture, the soul of the national life of Israel was crushed and even to this day they have no place to lay their heads on. Who knows if the fall of the Hindus is not due to the same reason, viz, their obstinate refusal to accept the teachings and to follow the footsteps of those messengers of God who have been sent from time to time to preach the gospel of inwardness and spirituality, of universality and liberty, of morality and social service, and of the harmony of Jnan, Bhakti and Karma in the sphere of religion,—such, for instance, as Buddha and Chaitanya, Nanak and Kavir in the past, and Raja Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and Brahmananda Keshabchandra Sen in the modern age? But this is by the way.

The first apostles of Christianity were occupied in the modest task of reforming individual lives and transforming the hearts of their followers rather than concerning

themselves with the affairs of the state. "Give unto Caesar what is due to Caesar" was their motto. But this humble beginning of the early Fathers was soon destined to bring about a revolution in the entire history of the European nations. When the Roman Empire was tottering on its legs and was on the point of being scattered to pieces at the encroachment of the Teutonic invaders from the north, the religion of Christ was slowly but steadily building up a spiritual sovereignty with its seat at the very centre of the crumbling empire of the Romans. The Pope of Rome was considered to be the representative of Christ's spirit on earth, and the holder of the key to the gates of heaven, and as such, he wielded the suzerain power over all the countries of Europe where the teachings of Jesus had penetrated. The state and the church were bound together under the headship of the Pope, with a wonderful ecclesiastical organisation, spreading a net-work of Christian institutions, and bringing all men under the moralising influence of the church, which could exercise absolute authority in every

sphere of life. The crowns trembled before the autocratic powers of the Pope of Rome ; holy wars between the Cross and the Crescent were undertaken at the issue of a Papal order ; states entered into battles against states and contracted treaties or formed offensive and defensive alliances with states at a moment's signal given by the raising of a little finger of the Pope. Thousands of earnest souls brought cart-loads of silver and gold to His Holiness and purchased salvation through confessions and sacraments. The secular or temporal was entirely subordinated to the spiritual. Monasticism and celibacy with their attendant impurities were the order of the day. But the Christian church is to be judged not by her abuses and evils, but by her power to meet the needs of the age, by the darkness of ignorance which she removed, by the emancipation of women, the protection of children and the elevation of the masses, that she secured, by the abolition of slavery and declaration of the equal rights of men which she brought about through the Reformation of Martin Luther.

If one wants to get at the root-spring of the life of modern European nations, one must search for it in the history of the Protestant reformation. Nowhere is the supremacy of religion as a great power for nation-building more clearly manifested than in the growth of the western nations, which were baptised by fire through reformation. The prayers of the Christian heart embodied in "Thy will be done" and "Thy kingdom come"—form the centre of the whole movement. The Divine will is no doubt fulfilling itself in Nature and in human history, whether we will it or not ; but what the spiritual leaders of the Reformation wanted to accomplish was that the free-will of man, which is a spark of the fire of Divine Energy, may be devoted wholly and entirely to the realisation of the Divine purpose, and that the customs and traditions, the laws and institutions that run counter to the current of Divine will may be altogether abolished or transformed in the light of the new spirit, that the dignity of man should be recognised and that a brotherhood of man must be established throughout the world—

in which the good of each will be the good of all, and peace and goodwill, love and service may reign supreme as the highest virtues. The ideal of a kingdom of Heaven which is to be sought at all costs is no doubt implicitly contained already in our Upanishads, e. g. in the idea of *Swaraj* or self-rule and in the conception of Atman held before us in such passages as, "Verily the Self is to be seen, to be heard, and to be meditated upon ; verily by the perception and realisation of the Self everything else is known," " that Self is dearer than the son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else" etc. The same idea is also implied in the Mahomedan concept of theocracy. But it was made more explicit and sought more earnestly by the Christian workers following the injunction of the Bible—"Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you." This Ideal has constantly stimulated the activities and sustained the energy of all political workers in the Christian countries through all their national struggles and calamities. They have embraced all sufferings and persecutions of

the Inquisition and even death by guillotine in pursuit of this ideal, because the crucifixion of Christ had provided them with a *symbol of cross* and a motto of self-surrender, which demanded total annihilation of the self of every Christian worker in order that the Divine will may triumph in every human life. The Reformation however did not stop with the injunction of self-sacrifice and devotion in the service of the coming kingdom of Heaven ; it also taught the European nations the value of human personality, the dignity of man as the son of God, the moral grandeur and the inner beauty of the soul of the humblest, the poorest and the lowliest individual as a member of this kingdom. This new conception of human life it was which worked miracles in the Christian states, by introducing the principle of the Divine right of peoples, as against the Divine right of Popes or kings, and which brought in its train all those revolutionary ideas of liberty and fraternity and equality as well as humanitarian legislations and philanthropic activities. The root-spring of Democracy and of Representa-

tive Government is thus to be found in the Protestant movement.

The reformation of the Christian church was however destined to play a still more important part in the process of nation-making in the west. For, while so many revolutions in the political history of England and France were 'brought about by the demands of the people for the right to govern themselves, to represent themselves in the affairs of the administration of the state, by the cry of "no taxation without representation" and "no legislation without election," the Pilgrim Fathers of the Puritan movement showed a more inspiring example of leaving the country bag and baggage and sailing for unknown shores in a new world,—not with a view to secure their right to taxation, but to safeguard their liberty of worship, their right to conduct Divine Service in accordance with the dictates of their own conscience. This sacred exodus of the founders of the American nation for a purely spiritual end has made the new continent a veritable place of pilgrimage for all lovers of liberty. What

variable conditions of a phenomenon ; he must rule out all disturbing factors and persist and persevere in his attempt to dive beneath the superficial appearances of things into the depth of reality ; he must be an accurate observer, with the gates of his senses wide open, tearing off the veils of prejudice and passion and searching for the eternal and immutable laws of the Book of Nature, which is open to all but the meaning of which is revealed to few ; lastly, he must be guided by the spirit of truth alone and discard all falsehood and hypocrisy and approach the jealous mistress of nature with a pure heart and unswerving fidelity, with single-minded devotion and absolute self-abnegation. If such be the picture of a devotee of science, does it differ much from the religious man's concept of a saint or Bhakta ? Are we not justified in holding that the habits of prayer and adoration and the practices of meditation and communion, which are enjoined and cultivated by the religious minds of all races, form the indispensable conditions of attaining success in the pursuit of science as well ? As

a matter of fact, almost all the great scientists of the world have been believers and their faith has been deepened in proportion to their advance in the field of scientific investigations and discoveries. (ii) As regards patriotism and communal feeling, if we are to accept the verdict of many competent historians and sociologists, it is the religious spirit that develops all the finer and tender sentiments of the human mind and teaches individuals to sacrifice their self-interest in the service of the common good. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is a religious injunction and so is the principle of "*Atmavat sarvabhuteshu*" i.e. "do unto others as you would be done by". As a matter of fact, all the greatest moral philosophers of the world have confessed their bankruptcy in trying to explain the rational basis of morality and of altruism or self-sacrifice except with the aid of the religious consciousness and its postulates. Religions of the world, by their insistence on congregational worship, social rites and public festivals, by their demand of love and service towards all creatures, have not only promoted patriotism but also generated the broader

outlook of cosmopolitanism and the higher feeling of international sympathies. Religion is thus the root and the foundation of patriotism and national life, and it is also preparing humanity for the reception of a better ideal of cosmopolitanism to be realised in a world-state of peace and good-will among the various races on earth,—an ideal, of which the League of Nations is presenting to us only a faint picture or an anticipatory glimpse.

III.

RELIGION AND THE WORLD.

Religion as a rule has very seldom allied itself with the world and its life and activities. Almost all the historical religions have set their faces definitely and deliberately against mundane affairs as something positively evil. The world with its family life and struggle for existence, society with its commerce and industry, science with its study of Nature and natural laws, its inventions of machines and instruments,—all these belong to the domain of matter and are as such alien to the kingdom of the spirit. In a word, whatever is of the earth, and of the flesh, has been delegated by tradition to the Devil and his infernal region, so that religion, content with its God and the soul, has deemed itself to be too sacred and spiritual to have any concern with these. No wonder that religious sentiments are very often found to originate and develop in the human mind as a reaction against the world. In general

there are three lines along which this reaction asserts itself, and we may consider them as three avenues through which the man of the world enters into the sphere of religious life and approaches the Infinite and the Eternal, in whom alone the human soul can find its abiding rest and joy.

(a) Strange as it may seem, it is the excessive enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, an over-indulgence in the life of the senses, or an inordinate gratification of the desires of the flesh to the highest point of satiety that in many cases prepares the way for *Vairāgya* and asceticism, which is nothing but the recoil of the spirit against the grosser, coarser, materialistic life on earth. For, after a long period of absorption of the mind in the various kinds of bodily ease and luxuries and creature comforts, the man of the world comes to a stage when the loss of vitality and ruin of health and the consequent fear of disease and death create a sort of spiritual hunger and thirst, of which the first manifestation is to be seen in a spirit of repentance and feeling of remorse resulting in an undue indifference or aversion to the world and

its wealth and happiness. The greater the attachment to one's earthly belongings and ambition for power and fame in the beginning of life, the stronger the detachment that follows in after-life. If one could trace the history of the *Sadhus* and *Sannyasis* of India, one would discover many a tale of self-indulgence and sensual gratification behind the ascetic wanderings and penances and mortifications of many of them. Whenever we find a man practising *tapasyâ* or religious austerities by self-torture in the form of raising one of his hands aloft and holding it erect for years, or of merging his body neck-deep in the cold current of the Ganges at Hardwar during the winter months, or of sitting cross-legged in the midst of blazing fire during the hottest days of the summer, or crossing the whole length of Hindusthân from the Himalayas in the north to the Rameswara bridge in the south in the posture of a snail crawling on the breast, we feel tempted to infer in most cases the reaction of an earnest soul against the excessive enjoyment of pleasures of the world or the misdirected exercise of the powers of the senses or talents

of the mind,—in any case, a natural compensation for the abuses of life and the losses of spiritual energy. Psychology of the religious sentiments in these cases will clearly illustrate certain hidden laws of the Economy of the spiritual Kingdom enforced by the mysterious processes of Providence.

(b) If the excessive gratification of desires leads an earnest mind to the path of religion, the emotional disturbances produced by the rude shock of a baffled desire or of unfulfilled expectations, and by the cruel touch of death and its agonising consequences, prove even a surer avenue for entering into the religious life. A man who has met with an unmerited loss or failure or disappointment in life, or who has been overwhelmed by grief at the removal or separation for ever by death of his wife, or friend or a dear one, naturally feels dejected and discontented with his lot, turns his back to the world and seeks comfort and consolation for the time being, if not abiding peace and rest, in a life of religious exercises. For, to a man placed under such adverse circumstances the world is nothing but an unbearable burden, life is dull and

dreary, and both of these have lost their charm and meaning. Hence his one sole endeavour is to leave alone and for ever the dark days of this earthly life with its cares and anxieties, with its memory of love and disappointment, of the deceased and their separation, and to begin in right earnest a new chapter in the history of his inner life, with the motto of renunciation and with the quest of eternal joy in the solitude of a forest or in a cave on the side of a mountain or on the shore of an ocean. Led by the primitive religious impulse, born of experiences of death in this mortal world, man bids good-bye to society and returns to nature. Death is thus a great revealer of the religious life as it is a great leveller in the physical life of man. Any number of instances could be quoted from the religious history of mankind to illustrate this truth and to prove the reality of this avenue or gateway to religion.

(c) There is still a third type of experiences that prepare the way for religious consciousness. If we describe the previous two pathways to religion as the volitional and the emotional, the third may

be designated the intellectual avenue to religious life. Apart from the consciousness of sin and the reaction against sensual excesses, the fear of death and the emotion of grief at the separation from one's near and dear ones, the world as we live in presents an amazing variety of events and phenomena which set the human mind a-thinking. We turn to nature and wherever we look around us, nothing meets our eyes but change and death and decay, movement and transformation and regeneration. Its varied aspects and manifold objects,—the sun and the moon and the stars above no less than the vast oceans and high mountain ranges below—are subject to incessant rhythmic processions and periodic rotations, to inevitable cycles of creation, evolution and dissolution,—the knowledge of which cannot but impress on our soul the transitory character of all that we see around us. Nor does the spectacle of human society and the panorama of a graduated scale of living creatures offer by striking contrast with the inanimate nature any redeeming features that could give relief to the human soul from its sense of nothingness or transitoriness of

the world. For, the teeming millions of living beings, including men, are equally subject to the laws of change and decay, and are daily falling easy victims to the inexorable destiny of birth and growth, of old age and death. Both the animate and the inanimate worlds are alike affected by the unceasing alternations and weathering influences of the pairs of opposites like hot and cold, dry and moist, light and darkness, attraction and repulsion, expansion and contraction. Add to all this the tales of woes and sufferings in human society, the cares and anxieties of family life, the trials and temptations of man as a moral agent, the calamities and disasters that befall the lot of a nation during its struggles for existence, the rise and decline of culture and civilisation in the human race, the pangs of mortification due to losses and defeats or failures and disappointments in the right solution of the problems of marriage and vocation,—which are indelibly recorded in the unwritten pages of the history both of communities and of individuals. It is reflection on these aspects of the world, on the changes and movements constantly going

on in nature and society, that brings home to the thinking minds of mankind the vanity of life and transitoriness of existence. Such thoughts and reflections lead as their inevitable result to an unusual gravity and seriousness in the mood and temperament of man, which in turn generate that habitual calmness and tranquillity of mind which is an indispensable condition for religious awakening and moral conversion. The soul that breathes in such an atmosphere of thought naturally turns away from the world of daily life in utter disgust and supreme contempt for its nothingness, and delights to dwell in the lofty regions of meditation, prayer and worship. Such a man ever seeks to remove the veil of illusion or *māyá* that surrounds the world, and to enter into the temple of the Holy of Holies, from where one can get a glimpse of the Eternal and the Infinite, the abode of peace and rest ever-lasting, the inexhaustible spring of light and life, and the region of beauty and joy and love unspeakable.

The origin and growth of religious consciousness as a result of such reactions against the ways of the world is largely responsible

for the wide gulf that has long separated the spiritual and the temporal, the religious and the secular views and affairs of man. This also accounts for the fact that the religious spirit of man has often and almost invariably found expression in a longing for liberation or deliverance from the bondage of flesh, from the life of the sense with its passions and impulses ; or in other words, religion has always manifested itself in a keen sense of the *need for salvation* from the world of untruth and illusion and from the life of ignorance and inertia,—a need that is satisfied with nothing short of the Infinite and the Eternal. In knowledge and love, in service and worship, in meditation and prayer, the religious man tries to rise above the world and to know the self within, to rise above the self and to realise the Spirit universal. He learns to discriminate, that is to say, between the real and the illusory, between the temporal and the Eternal, between the sensible and the supersensible.

This natural instinct of the religious mind has been encouraged and supported, almost in every age, in this country as well

as in other countries, by the lives and examples of the illustrious founders of historical religions and of the great preachers of religious movements, as understood and recorded by their followers. Buddha and Jesus, Chaitanya and Nanak, Sankara and a host of their apostolic followers, known as Sannyasis, Bhikshus, Sramans or monks, are said to have left behind them ideals of religious culture as illustrated in their own modes of living,—ideals which are not only incompatible with life in the family and in the state, but can only be realised in a condition of perfect isolation and detachment from the world. No wonder that the adherents of these great religious teachers should inherit from the original fountain-head of their inspiration a tendency to bid goodbye to their wives and children, to renounce all undertakings and pursuits in the world and to retire to hills and forests or to holy cities as pilgrims to the temple of God. Thus have arisen the institutions of temples and monasteries, with the order of *Vairāgis* and *Sannyāsis*, ascetic wanderers and celibate priests, preachers and preceptors, who are to this day honoured

as the most sacred visible manifestations of the religious spirit by the masses of mankind in every land.

Paradoxical are the ways of men in their religious adaptation to the world. The recoil against worldliness which gives birth to religious consciousness is but one extreme of the movement of the human mind which inevitably leads to the opposite extreme of more besetting snares of worldliness. As extremes always meet, we need not be surprised if we find religions making a world by themselves and religious orders exhibiting the worst form of worldly-mindedness. The life of celibacy and freedom from family ties among the priests and monks are not without their spiritual blessings, no doubt, but in the history of religious movements it is these very blessings that have often proved to be the sources of incalculable evils to the members of the religious orders themselves, to their spiritual organisations and to the human society and race in general. Family life has its cares and anxieties, its distractions and dissipations which hamper the growth of spiritual life and hinder the progress of

pilgrims to the temple of religion, but it also trains the soul in the habits of constant and continuous service and sacrifice, and imposes on us hard disciplines of regularity and heavy burdens of responsibility. Those who shrink from these services and sacrifices and flee from these disciplines and burdens run the risk of exposing themselves to more subtle forms of trials and temptations, and of leading an irresponsible self-centred life of lawlessness and pleasure-seeking. Family life involves fixity of habitation, a stable organisation of society, assuring peace and plenty, security and order to all its members; it involves hard struggles and labours for the maintenance of one's family, and as such, entails a certain amount restriction of liberty or loss of freedom. But the religious man in setting himself loose from what he considers to be fetters of the family and social life is often compelled to lead a nomadic life of wandering freely from land to land like a bird, remaining a stranger in every place and regarded as an alien by every man,—a life which neither leads to the peace of mind nor to the comforts of the body, and which

on the contrary robs one of rest, deprives one of security, and thus conduces to ruin one's health, and perhaps cuts at the prime of youth a life which might be otherwise useful and valuable to society ; or as is usually the case, led by the gregarious instinct and social impulse ingrained in the human heart, the religious man is compelled to seek in a temple or a monastery a permanent and fixed abode, a stable spiritual order, and a secure ecclesiastical organisation, with all the duties and obligations, all the interests and attachments incidental on a communal life. In the latter case, the spirit of worldliness takes its vengeance on the religious mind by generating in it an inordinate attachment for a holy seat, a ragged piece of cloth, a stick or a pitcher or a jar, and an excessive greed for money, an intense longing for self-glorification or an abnormal growth of affection for a disciple. By an irony of fate, the members of a religious order who have forsaken the world are found to quarrel and even fight ' over small things, and to cling selfishly to trifling materials, which an ordinary man of the world would think it beneath his dignity to take care or

notice of. Look at the dishonesty, the wickedness and the license of priestly classes and monastic orders in every country,—their cruel extortion of money, their mis-appropriation of properties endowed for a religious object, their notorious associations and loose morals, their luxury and pomp and secret enjoyment of forbidden pleasures of beauty and a thousand other vices and follies,—and one will understand why Sādhus and Sannyásis, monks and priests, (especially when they are celibates) in the temples and monasteries, are often despised as a class, and have sometimes been made objects of ridicule by play-wrights and novelists. One has simply to visit the temples in some of the places of pilgrimage, and one will be shocked by the heartlessness of the priests and the dark and dreary spectacles of misery and suffering inflicted by them on the poor pilgrims. When we think of the commercial use of piety in these temples, of the selling and buying of religious salvation as a mercantile commodity in these places of pilgrimage, of the priests or clergymen regarding themselves as gate-keepers of God and imposing on others the credulous faith

that they are veritably the holders of the key to God's Kingdom of Heaven, and behaving themselves as spiritual chemists dispensing doses of medicines for all sorts of earthly ailments, or as tradesmen of the religious market dealing in the nourishment of the soul in wholesale or retail as it pleases their fancy, we can easily realise how these holy cities have turned to be unholy ones and how these priests have come to be treated with disrespect and irreverence by a faithless laity. The worldliness of religion is further manifested in the splendid organisation of the householder Priests and of the itinerant Preceptors dividing all the families in the Hindu community into separate groups, each receiving spiritual ministration from its own priest or preceptor from generation to generation. This hereditary order of preceptors and priesthood (*Gurus* and *Purohits*) are not less self-seeking and bent on self-aggrandisement than the *Mohants* and *Pândás* of the pilgrim-centres as far as the mercantile and commercial dispensation of religion is concerned. In the Christian churches, there are spiritual Peers and a

hierarchy of grades among the members of the ecclesiastical organisation with their councils, pageantry and procession, their transfers and promotions, scales of salaries and certificates of honour, titles and benefices, just as in the temporal order of Government servants. I have heard of a case where a Vairági (Hindu Monk) won over to his side all the high officials and noble landholders of his locality by free and liberal distribution of bribes so that he might succeed to the *Gadi* (or throne of the Mohant or head of the temple) on the death of his predecessor, setting aside the claims of other candidates for the same office of dignity. Of course there are honourable exceptions which prove the rule. This reduplication of the picture of worldly interests and secular affairs in the religious sphere and spiritual order of men, with all the heinous offences and mean tricks, with all the vulgar pleasures and petty self-seekings of the world proves and exemplifies the inherent tendency of human nature to cling to the world with its family and social organisation and impresses on us the necessity of seeking and finding in the worldly life itself

with its family duties and social responsibilities the way to our salvation and the fulfilment of our highest and best religious instincts and impulses, emotions and sentiments. It follows therefore as a necessary corollary to the truth of this indubitable and immutable law of human nature that the overgrowth of temples and monasteries and superabundance of priests and monks, *sādhus* and *sannyāsīs* in India and elsewhere, far from being an index of religiosity in the country or age of their existence, are rather the symptoms of decay and degeneration in the moral and religious beliefs and practices of the people or community which encourages or supports them. Their presence betrays an erroneous conception of religion and of the nature of God and His relation to man, and a still more erroneous notion of the world and of society and family life in relation to God and religion. With the diffusion of right knowledge, with the insight into and experience of deeper relations between the world and religion, mankind will come to recognise that these sacred temples and holy cities with their innumerable *Sādhus* and priests, as we find

them at present, are not the pride and glory of a country but rather the causes of its poverty, the signs of its irreligion, the hot-bed of vices, and as such, they ought to be reformed or demolished, and the sooner it is done, the better. It may be necessary to have recourse to legislation, as has been done in many states during the modern age, in order to do away with these evils of human society, and to regulate their internal management, especially to control their endowments of lands, jewels and other properties,—so deep-rooted is their influence and so persistent and longstanding is their abuse.

We may now try to seek the common soil and foundation on which both the world and religion have their roots deeply laid, and from which both of them spring as two flowers on the same stem, or rather as the flower and the fruit, to use a more exact form of expression.

Religion, as it is generally understood and as it has manifested itself in the individual consciousness and in the human history, is not only the bond or the chain that unites and links all men with each other and with the rest of the creation, but also forms

the basic foundation on which the whole structure of social or national life is built up. It is, so to speak, at once the soil and the moisture, the living germ and the ingredients of nourishment, the light and the air, and the life and vitality of man, the essence of his spirit and the cream of his soul, the kernel of the fruit of his personality. It is on account of this intimate connection with the vital points of the life and the soul of man, that religion has played such an important part in the history of nations and exerts such a dominating influence to this day on the minds of individuals. Properly conceived, there should not only exist no conflict or opposition between religion and the world, but the former should find in the latter its legitimate scope and sphere of activity, and sustain the continued progress of human society by advancing the welfare of the family and the prosperity of the nation. Happily the healthy common sense of mankind has ever revolted against an unreasonable separation between the world and religion, and in its naïve dogmatic emphasis on the world's needs and requirements, which the saving benefits and the redemptive

grace of religion alone can satisfy, it has even gone to the opposite extreme of making religion a handmaid of secular interests and materialistic purposes. Thus it is that in the lower culture of religion, as prevailing in the savage tribes and primitive races as well as in the ignorant and illiterate masses of the civilised peoples, offerings are made to propitiate gods and goddesses, and other modes of religious exercise also are resorted to, mostly with a view to secure earthly advantages or to avert the evil influences emanating from alien natural or supernatural forces. But even behind these crude and erroneous notions and misdirected superstitious practices of religion one may discover an underlying spirit of bringing the world and religion together in an intimate relationship, however unsatisfactory and incompatible this mode of relation may be from the higher logical and moral standpoints. Even in the case of the historical religions of the world we may notice that the conflict between the temporal and the spiritual is to a large extent more apparent than real, for when we see a Buddha or a Jesus, a Chaitanya

or a Nanak renouncing the world and preaching religion, we do not find them inculcating an ascetic ideal based on contempt for the world and family life. On the contrary we should interpret their opposition to and abandonment of the world as a preliminary discipline required to obtain self-control and to secure the vision of truth and self-knowledge, which is the final goal of man's spiritual endeavours and the only solution of his age-long quest ; and partly as a self-imposed form of service and sacrifice for the noble mission of preaching the Eternal Truth, when it is found, with a view to educating the ignorant humanity and elevating the depressed, healing the sick, comforting the afflicted and consoling the bereaved, fighting against all social evils and founding a kingdom of righteousness. In other words, the lessons that the great founders of religions have left behind them, more by their lives and examples than by their sermons and precepts, are not to the effect that the world is an evil and society is a snare and that both of them are opposed to the realisation of the religious ideal and should therefore be renounced by a seeker after spiritual life, but

rather that the body should be crucified in order that the soul may resurrect, that one should die to the life of the flesh and of mere senses in order that one may be born anew in the spiritual world of truth and beauty and goodness, and may thereby participate in the power and the glory of the eternal and universal order of Reason as an intelligent and free member of the Kingdom of Heaven. One must be reborn or regenerated in spirit before one can taste of the blissful fruit of immortality during this very life, here on this earth and in the present human form—this seems to be the burden of teachings of the best religious minds in the east and in the west, both in the ancient and modern times. It is to establish the close connection between the sensible and the supersensible, between the human and the Divine, between the earthly and the heavenly spheres of reality that the theory of incarnation, the notions of angels and gods as intermediary agents, the philosophical conception of Logos or the world-soul and the doctrine of emanation have been formulated by Theologians and Metaphysicians. Nay, we may go a step further and say that the old

methods of practising religion outside the world and away from the society of men were just as incompatible with the injunctions of scriptures and verdicts of religious consciousness as the modern habits of substituting for religion a purely secular view of things and materialistic enjoyment of life, which engross the mind entirely in temporal and mundane affairs, and teaching man to identify the Ethical with the Economic good, deprive him of the devotional attitude of prayer and worship with an upward look and with outstretched arms. We must recognise a higher ideal and a deeper longing in the spirit of man than to be well-fed, well-clad and to live a comfortable life in the midst of plenty and luxury. We shall have to strike a *via media* and to found on the golden mean a truer view of religion and a higher view of the world which will not only preserve and harmonise the interests and dignity of both, but find in each a supplement of the other, seeking in the world and nature of man, the *raison d'être* of religion, and finding in religion and spiritual culture the crowning glory and fulfilment of the end of human life and

society. How to combine these two modes of human activities, viz, the temporal and the spiritual, and how to make a synthesis of faith and culture under modern conditions of life and thought,—is a problem, towards which the earnest efforts of all the sound and healthy minds that are philosophically inclined and at the same time religiously disposed should be directed. Let us now turn to this problem and attempt a solution.

The modern age is characterised by a remarkable change in the angle of vision on the part of the best men of society so far as their religious duty and spiritual culture are concerned. We see around us many a beautiful soul that seldom or never attend the church and perform any specifically religious acts of worship and prayer or other rites and ceremonies, but who carry out loyally and faithfully and almost in a religious spirit all the duties they owe to the family, to the society, to the state and their station in life. Thus there are many earnest and sincere men who would not care to pay subscriptions for a religious body or endow large

sums of money for charitable objects in connection with an ecclesiastical organisation, and who lead apparently a godless and irreligious life with atheistic and materialistic views, having no sentimental regard for a temple or a priest, nor any superstitious credulity in, and attachment to, a particular god or religious tradition. But they are at the same time dutiful fathers, devoted sons, loving husbands, faithful and loyal officers, honest traders, industrious labourers, and peaceful and law-abiding citizens. The question then arises as to whether such persons are less religious than those pious individuals whose devoutness is manifested only in performing religious rites and ceremonies in the temple or the church or in prayer and worship in solitude or in the congregation, but who are otherwise failing in their duties to the family, to the society, to the state and to their own selves, and who may be ever violating moral obligations, laws of purity and righteousness and also utterly lacking in sympathy and love for their friends and relations as well as in zeal and enthusiasm for the services of men. Theoretically speaking, the question is not

difficult to answer, for in an ideal world, no man can be perfectly successful in the discharge of his secular duties and attain the highest excellence in the management of the affairs of the family, the society and the state, unless he has undergone some kinds of religious discipline and spiritual culture which alone can enable him to realise his own self in its true nature and in its proper relation to the entire universe of nature and society, or of matter and spirit. Similarly, in an ideal religion, no man can earn the distinction of being pious and devout if he fails to fulfil the moral obligations that his place in the society imposes on him. In other words, morality and religion must always go together and cannot be really separated from each other. A religious man must be already moral or his religion is imperfect; and a moral man is already on the way to becoming religious, otherwise his morality will be defective. There are not two separate water-tight departments of human life, one for religious practices and the other for moral and social activities. No, the soul of man admits of no such division in its household, its life being an organic

unity in which each member subserves the end of the other as well as of itself, and thereby furthers the good of the organism as a whole, so that the part and the whole are mutually dependent. It is our undue emphasis on their distinctness that leads to the separation of morality and religion and creates a claim to superiority of the one over the other.

Now, granting that the secular and the spiritual, the moral and the religious duties are inseparably connected and may be viewed as two complementary aspects of one and the same whole of rational life, let us consider how, on the one hand, a religious man should look at the world and its secular and temporal affairs, and how, on the other hand, the worldly life and its duties, as seen by a merely moral man, can be transformed into the highest mode of religious worship and the sublimest type of spiritual experiences in the light of the "philosophers' stone" that is acquired as a divine gift by those blessed souls who combine faith and culture and harmonise the real and the ideal, the material and the spiritual.

Nothing can help us in bringing religion into a most intimate union with the world than the sacred spell of a formula or motto, which is perhaps one of the finest and most popular expressions of the religious ideal of the modern age, viz. "Work is worship." This motto should be engraved in the heart of every man and made the guiding principle of one's life in this country at the present hour. Reflect on this *Mantra*. Work without worship is blind and lifeless, and worship without work is barren and fruitless. It is only by their union that perfection in either can be looked for. Every work should be performed in the spirit and the attitude of a worshipper, and worship should be regarded as the most sacred of all works, as the divine service or duty *par excellence*. This ideal is not foreign to the Indian mind but is quite in keeping with our ancient traditions and modern usages. One of the greatest spiritual geniuses of modern India, Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, defined worship as "love of God and doing works that are acceptable to Him," thus including in it the performance of all moral duties, personal and social; for example,

acting according to one's conscience and reason, love and charity to animals, and service of men,—must all be regarded as necessary constituents or elements of worship. The greatest Vaishnava reformer and devotee of Bengal, Lord Chaitanya, preached a spiritual religion, the central and fundamental feature of which lay in the simple golden rule of “singing the name of God to one's joy and compassion for all living creatures”. And if we look still further back to a remoter period of our religious history, we meet with a most beautiful verse which expresses the same truth in another way, viz. “A householder should be devoted to Brāhma (the Supreme Being), versed in the knowledge of essential Reality and truth (i. e. in Theology or Metaphysics), and dedicate to God whatever actions he performs”. The Indian traditions and law-books also recognise in the fulfilment of all temporal affairs a kind of payment of the threefold debt, which every member of the human race owes from the moment of his birth, viz., (a) the debt to one's ancestors or *pitris*, (b) the debt to the sages or *Rishis*, and (c) the debt to gods or *devas*. In other words, all duties.

are to be performed in the spirit of fulfilling the obligations imposed on us by our relation to the Universal and Eternal Moral Order, of which our parents and forefathers as well as other human relations, the sages and seers of mankind, and the spiritual agencies or supernatural beings supposed to be presiding over nature and pervading the material world are considered as representatives. This conception of our duties as debts and of the ancestors, sages and gods as our creditors is not far removed from the Kantian representation of the duties of Ethics as commandments of God when expressed in the religious phraseology. Nay, the Indian conception seems to be a more comprehensive and explicit statement of the same principle or truth which Kant sought to enunciate in a more systematic manner and according to a more philosophical method.

A detailed examination of these debts is neither necessary nor desirable at this place, but a few general remarks on their implications may be helpful in clearing the way to a right understanding of the subject.

Paying debts to the *pitrīs* or the spirits of the ancestors does not mean merely offering *pīndas* or lumps of rice and sugar with milk and curd or handful of water in memory of the departed souls, prescribed in the Brahmanical rites of *Srāddha* and *Tarpana*, but rather remembering in all humility and reverence and gratitude, our precious heritage of the ancient institutions of family and society from them, and discharging honestly and faithfully all our obligations to the family and to the species by preparing a better, healthier, more refined and more cultured home for our progeny, and by organising a juster and more beneficial social order for the human race. Similarly, debts to the Rishis or sages are paid when we dispel the darkness of ignorance with the burning lamp of wisdom, extend the blessings of education to the humblest cottages, study the scriptures and writings of our saints and poets, of the scientists, and philosophers, of the statesmen and lawgivers, and thereby enter into the spirit of our customs and traditions and social usages, and modify them, improve them and reform them in the light of our progressive

knowledge and inspiration. Finally, one owes a sacred debt of homage to the gods or heavenly powers, who are regulating the courses of the planets and the winds and the streams and shaping the surface of the earth with all its rugged hills and undulating valleys, arid deserts and grassy plains ; or to the supernatural agencies or spirits behind nature's laws and forces as well as to representatives of divinity in the infra-human world,—who are supplying us with air and light, fire and water and the materials of food and clothes and dwellings and all other physical necessities of life. The duties that correspond to the debts due to these gods may be fulfilled by the due observance of all the hygienic rules and laws of health, by strictly regulating the systems of our diet, clothes and housing according to the most advanced methods of sanitary and medical sciences based on chemistry, biology, anatomy, physiology and other branches of knowledge, and also by performing sacrifices in the forms of self-control and self-restraint, moderation and temperance, and regular physical exercises with a view to secure a vigorous circulation of blood, deep respira-

tion and quick digestion, and thereby to promote a sound and robust health and a long and active life. Another way of paying debts to gods is to enjoy, with the gates of our senses open and under the guidance of our reason, all the blessings of songs and sounds, of light and colour, of manifold forms and beautiful landscapes, of sweet tastes of fruits and fragrant smells of flowers, of the gentle breeze and delicate touches that Nature's bounty has provided for us. For, as the poet has beautifully put it :

“God is paid when man receives,
To enjoy is to obey.”

Thus we can realise how the Indian sages sought to conceive of the world as a Moral Order with God in its centre, and so regulated the affairs of the family and the state as to make every duty a step towards the fulfilment of our obligation to the Moral Order or a payment of debt we owe to the representatives of God on earth, be they our parents or forefathers, or sages and seers, or the heavenly powers or nature-spirits. In other words, every duty is to be regarded as a commandment of God and to

be fulfilled with all the faith and earnestness and sanctity that are attached to worship. Here again, observe how morality and religion coincide with each other and the barrier between the temporal and the spiritual breaks down absolutely. The highest goal of religion lies in seeing God as the Self of our self, as the Spirit behind nature, as the Father of the family of mankind. But how is it possible if we keep Him outside, or even above, the world and its activities, and if we do not try to realise Him in the love and affection of our sweet homes as well as in the healthy play of our natural family instincts, in the orderly progress of art and civilisation no less than in the struggles and turmoils of our political life, in the solution of our industrial and economic problems, and the consequent social unrest of the modern times ? In other words, the religion of the modern age must conceive of God as immanent in the world, as actively engaged in guiding and directing the growth and development of the institutions and organisations of the family and the state, in moulding and shaping the lives

of individuals and nations through the stress and pressure of time, place, and circumstances, through the laws and manners, customs and traditions which are but the progressive manifestations and imperfect and inadequate expressions of the Eternal and Universal Reason or the Logos or the Spirit of God working in Nature and History. On the other hand, the modern age will have nothing to do with a religion which does not conceive of the world as God-centred, God-vestured, God-founded, essentially divine in its origin and end, abiding in God's eternal laws, resting on God's unceasing love, and maintained by God's life-giving grace at each and every moment of its existence. This conception of the world is beautifully conveyed by the first verse of the Isa-Upanishad, which runs thus :

“Isávásyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyám jagat.

Tena tyaktena bhunjithá má gridhah kasyasviddhanam.”

All this universe of things that are constantly moving is to be enveloped by God ; thou shalt enjoy life as His gift in

this spirit and not covet after any one's property.

This verse should be the guiding motto of every Indian in the modern age, for it contains in a nutshell, as it were, the principle of harmony or reconciliation between the world and religion. It not only enables us to view the world as the temple of God and to realise God as the all-pervading and in-dwelling Spirit of the universe, but also enjoins us to live and act in full consciousness of the presence of this Divine Reality within and without. We should accept our life as a trust from God and enjoy its blessings as His gifts, and at the same time we must perform all our duties as offerings to Him and give everyone of our fellow-men his dues, not coveting anyone else's property. There is thus contained in this utterance of our Rishis not only the principle of morality for the individual life, but also that of justice and benevolence which should govern our social life ; and what is more important, it commands us to live our life in the world perfectly in harmony with the highest religious ideal of God-consciousness.

IV.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL LIFE.

There was a time when religion was the supreme factor in human society. It was the source of law, of morality, as well as of science and art, and all that furthers the spiritual interests of man centred round religion. Ancestor-worship, the priesthood of the father and the king, sacrificial repast, public assemblies in temples and such other religious institutions characterised the earliest political societies, not to speak of the crude belief in spirits and magical influence, and the consultation of auguries and oracles that prevailed among primitive men and influenced their moral conduct. In India, not only the details of a man's daily life but also the administration of social and political institutions were governed by religious rites and ceremonies, and the priests were the uncrowned rulers of the day. The sciences of astronomy and geometry, the arts of poetry

and painting developed in close connection with the religious life of the people. That the Hindus made no hard and fast distinction between religion and law or morality is amply evidenced by their acceptance of the codes of law and social usages as so many scriptures (*Dharmasāstras*) and by the sanctity attached to Duty, to the Judge and to courts of law, through such names as *Dharma*, *Dharmarāja* and *Dharmadhikarana*. In Europe, the civilisation of the Greek people was fostered by the city fire and the Delphic oracle. They identified politics with religion, although the latter was afterwards reduced to a sort of contract, when forms and rituals gained the ascendancy, priests gave place to attorneys and lawyers, votes superseded the commands of oracles and injunctions of priests, and the voice of the people became the voice of God, till in Roman politics discussions and arguments took away the last savour of love and devotion that animated the public life of civilised Europe.*

With the advent and spread of Christianity,

(*Woodrow Wilson : The State).

the supremacy of religion was again asserted, a new order of authority arose in the shape of the ecclesiastical organisation with the Pope at its head. The Rulers of states found themselves overridden in many matters by their spiritual 'peers', and the people were obliged to serve two masters, till the Reformation brought the conflict to an end by separating the Church from the State. In England, the Parliament had legislated against the usurpations of the see of Rome a hundred and fifty years before the Reformation began. There the Bishops had the privilege of sitting in the House of Lords and legislating in spiritual matters; they taxed themselves separately in the Convocation as the Parliament had no right to tax them. The clergy were tried in ecclesiastical courts, as the lay authorities could not punish them even for murder, felony or robbery. The jurisdiction of the 'spiritual' Judges was extended over testamentary and matrimonial cases, as well as cases of immorality, slander and libel. The causes of education, art and social good also were mainly advanced by the churches with their monasteries, cathedrals and poor-houses.

It is worth our while to consider why religion came to be disregarded in subsequent times and why it has lost its influence on the social life of man in the modern age. Several factors, moral and intellectual, have contributed to the bringing about of this undesirable state of things. The advance of knowledge and the growth of experimental sciences, dispelling the belief in the superstitious elements of religion and revealing the erroneous nature of the cosmogonies of the scriptures ; the degradation of priests, elevating themselves into a self-contained and self-sufficient class of aristocrats and thus lending their support to the principles of caste and inequality ; the sectarian narrowness and mutual jealousy and hatred among religions ; the stereotyped forms and ceremonies, the elaborate codes of dogmas and creeds, that crush the inwardness and spirituality of religious life ; the impious persecution and burning of martyrs ; the puritan divorce from the fine arts and innocent enjoyments of life, the anti-social and ascetic tendencies, turning man away from the world and family-life, or leading him to the opposite dangers of

other-worldliness and individualism ; the evils of impurity and dissolute life accompanying monasticism and celibacy in most cases ; the fatalistic and deterministic outlook and the inactivity of quietism retarding social progress ;—all these elements indicating the corruption of religion have resulted in a spirit of indifference, if not aversion, to religion in general on the part of the educated world. Hence the discredit of religion and a loud cry for morality as its substitute. We have already witnessed the birth of “Ethical Societies” in the west, which are meant to play the role of churches without God.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the value of a thing is best judged by the amount of evil it creates, when abused, and by the extent and magnitude of opposition it can successfully overcome, when directed along its proper channel. Nowhere is the truth of this proposition more clearly illustrated than in the case of religion. It is because religion is one of the elemental forces of nature, and the motive powers of human society, it is because religion is grounded on the adamantine rocks of reality, that it has

survived to this day and come out victorious, in spite of the periods of decay and degeneration in religious ideas and practices and in spite of the violent attacks of its opponents. We find religion raising its head slowly but surely and attaining the position and share in social life which belong to it by divine allotment. Like a piece of gold tested in a hot furnace, the essential, the permanent and the universal truths of religion, severed from its accidental, transitory and local elements, shine all the more brilliantly, and like a solitary star in the blue vault of heaven, the eternal verities of religion shed a cheering and purifying ray of light into the darkest crevices of the human heart.

Now, what are these eternal verities of religion, divested of its accidental and temporal features? Let us find an answer by reflecting on the nature of the human soul and on the sources and contents of the religious consciousness.

Nothing is more characteristic of the human soul than its sense of the finiteness of everything in the mundane Universe, including the great living nature without and the greater

living self within. And yet one may say with equal truth and certainty that one of the most essential and inseparable elements of this very characteristic is to be found in the consciousness of the Infinite in the soul of man. There is in man an inexplicable longing for the Infinite, a mysterious feeling that nothing short of the Infinite can fully satisfy him, that the possession of the whole material universe with all its physical comforts and sensual enjoyments are as nothing and even less than nothing, as compared with the joy in the Infinite which the soul thirsts after in its best moments and which is felt at the same time to be already lying hidden in the depth of his self-conscious region. Philosophers tell us that this longing for the Infinite is the root of all the desires and activities in the practical life of man, and that the unconscious idea or implicit consciousness of the Infinite is the logical presupposition and forms the background of all the perception and knowledge of the finite in the intellectual or cognitive endeavours of man. It is on account of this finite-infinite nature of the human self, or rather

owing to the perpetual contrast between the infinite and the finite within it, that man is alternately finding himself in bondage to the world and yet in freedom, in a state of ignorance and misery and at the same time endowed with the light of knowledge that fills him with delight. It is this dualism in his own consciousness giving rise to the contrast between appearance and reality, between the sensible and the supersensible, that forms the basis of religion. But for this dualistic consciousness in man of the finite and the infinite, of the temporal and the eternal, of the material and the spiritual, of the animal and the rational, of the real and the ideal, of the earthly and the heavenly, there would have been no religion, no morality, no art and no philosophy in the human race. As a matter of fact, it is this eternal conflict between light and darkness, between the good and the evil, between the spirit and the flesh, that impels man to religion and through religion to all the higher activities and interests of life in a civilised society.

If we analyse the religious consciousness, we get several elements lying at its root, viz.

faith, hope and charity, wonder, admiration and reverence, a sense of one's own finitude and of the transitoriness of the world, and a longing for the Infinite and the Eternal, from which the finite self and the temporal world derive their existence, by which they are maintained, and to which they return at the end. In other words, religion is nothing but the manifestation in human consciousness of those perennial instincts and emotions which keep the world a-going, which create in the soul the spirit of unrest and discontent at the finite and the temporal, and generate a thirst for union with the Supreme Being, in whom alone the self of man lives, moves and has its being. Religion is thus the connecting link between the Creator and the created, between the Centre of the Universe and the finite forces and minds that are at work in every part of the vast dominion of Nature and of the spiritual realm of ends. The impulse to know and to create, which lies at the bottom of all our scientific and artistic endeavours, and the impulse to love and to serve, which directs all our social and philanthropic activities, come

from this religious instinct. The sense of sin, the feeling of repentance and remorse, the spirit of humility, the pangs of conscience and consciousness of moral obligation,—all these have their root-spring in the heart of religion. If man's religious consciousness springs from the dualism between appearance and reality, between the finite and the infinite, between the natural and the spiritual, between the animal and the rational, between the flesh and the spirit, between the earthly and the heavenly, as we have seen, it is in religion again that this dualism is solved, and the basis of their unity and harmony and synthesis is discovered. Through the religious consciousness, man rises above the world and transcends its finitude and mortality, gathers strength in the midst of its trials and temptations, plucks up courage and displays heroism in the battlefield of life, and then finds his lasting abode in the land of peace and rest, of joy and bliss, where alone he can taste of the fruits of immortality and experience his unity and identity with the infinite, eternal and universal Soul. Religion is thus not merely concerned with the other-worldly interests

and salvation of the soul or its preparation for the life beyond the grave, but must also occupy itself with the knowledge of this world and make an attempt to understand its meaning, in order to appreciate the aims and ideals of life and also to find out the means and processes of their realisation on earth.

Thus science and philosophy, morality and art, and indeed whatever promotes the spiritual culture and furthers the social progress of man, have their foundation in religion. Religion educates and develops the soul-force which is the fountain of all inspirations for social reformers, and supplies the necessary strength to the promoters of social welfare and progress. Religion teaches man how to rise above nature by studying nature's laws and overcoming nature's forces, and thus marks the beginning of science. Religion disciplines the human self to raise itself above its own lower nature, to purify the baser impulses and animal passions, to control the selfish instincts and to regulate the violent emotions under the guidance of reason ; it is this expression of the religious consciousness that goes under the name of

morality. Again, it is through religion that man tries to transcend the region of the sensible, and to catch a glimpse of the Ideal Beauty in the supersensible kingdom of Heaven, with a view to mould the materials of the real world after the pattern of ideal perfection which is but dimly revealed within his own heart ; and it is this realisation of the ideal Beauty in and through the materials of the sensible world that we call art. Science, morality and art are therefore only different manifestations of the religious consciousness, and are products of the same endeavours of the human soul after the Ideal and the Spiritual, of the same thirst for the Infinite and the Perfect, of the same quest of the Eternal Reality, and the same longing for absolute freedom, peace and joy, which all higher religions have exhibited in their intense longing and earnest search for God. Thus religious practices of meditation, adoration, and divine service consisting in love and good-will towards men, are extremely helpful to the growth of science, art and morality which are recognised to be indispensable elements of social progress.

Again, it is in religion that the soul of man returns to itself, comes to be conscious of its own nature which is in God, and of its own powers, as the rightful heir to creation and a participator in the glory of the sovereign Lord of the Universe, who is his Father. If we dive deeper, we shall discover that the basis of social life and the meaning of the relation between the individual and society also lie hidden in the profoundest regions of man's religious consciousness. If one could penetrate into the innermost processes of his own mind, into the workings of his profoundest desires and most intimate activities, he would discover that his self always moves between two poles or centres which are equally important and equally divine. There are two forces or tendencies which constantly animate all human activities, viz., (1) the tendency to bring everything to oneself, to possess the whole world, to be the master of his surroundings and of the conditions of his life and existence, or in other words, to be the monarch of all he surveys ; and (2) on the other hand, an equally irresistible tendency to go out of oneself, to

find an 'other' or the *alter* ego, to give away his all, to lose himself, and to realise his highest and best Self through self-sacrifice, self-effacement and self-renunciation. Thus in egoism as well as in altruism, in self-realisation no less than in self-sacrifice, man is fulfilling the law of his own being. Now, society is the outcome and the expression of the second tendency, which is also the basis of the first. The self and the not-self are mutually related and cannot be conceived of, nor exist, apart from each other. Man forms or joins society with a view to discover himself, to realise himself in a world, and to see his own image in it as through a mirror. As God is reflected in man or as man is made after the image of God, so is man reflected in his society, and the nature of the latter corresponds to that of the individuals composing it. All the organisations and administrations of the state, the whole machinery of the Government, and all the institutions of society are but instruments for the building up of the spirit,—or factories for the manufacture of the soul. We are living in the Valley of soul-

making, as a great modern thinker has put it. We are not altogether fettered by nature's mechanism, as with iron bars and chains, but love, sentiment, religion, beauty too have their place on earth. In the religious consciousness of man, we find clearly the highest manifestation of the same two tendencies which form the roots of his self-regarding and social activities, viz., to get to know himself, to realise his *summum bonum* or the highest good, and at the same time to dedicate himself to the service of his fellow-beings, to lose himself in the 'other', in the whole, or in the Absolute. These centripetal and centrifugal forces are keeping the world-cycle in order, just as the attraction of the earth by the sun, counteracted by the inner force of the former always impelling it away from the centre, brings about the revolving movement of the earth round the sun.

If religion has expressed itself in the form of a desire for liberation from the bondage to nature and selfishness, bondage to matter and flesh, bondage to evils and illusions and ignorance and sufferings, society is just

the medium through which this liberation can be attained ; for, freedom of every kind is attainable only through collective endeavours, and even the blessings of individual life can not be procured without the aid of a corporate life and social activities of all other individuals. Thus not only our physical necessities like food, cloth, fuel, and dwelling-house but also our language and thought, science and art depend on the social environment, and no man can obtain salvation individually any more than he can earn bread and clothe himself without the active co-operation of all members of humanity. Humanity is one solid body and we cannot separate a single individual from the life of the whole. It requires at least two persons to make a family and to create a race, and the various groups of society and nations of the earth are but individuals in the family of mankind. The fact of the solidarity of mankind is being increasingly realised in the modern age, and it is evident from what we have said before that religion is the one essential factor which keeps this solidarity intact and alive. If society exists for liberating the individual

through collective efforts from his bondage to matter, which is the root of all ignorance, inertia and pains, is not religion just the means to secure the salvation of society from all the evils of impurity, intemperance, injustice, and oppression of the weak by the strong ?

Society depends for its continued progress and prosperity on three important factors, viz.,—(1) advancement of science and arts, which can secure the conquest of the soul of man over the forces of nature by discovering the invisible laws of nature and by utilising her hidden resources of energy and material for the comforts and conveniences, health and well-being of the physical life of man ; (2) advancement of morality or wealth of character, which secures the no less valuable triumph of the spiritual over the natural and of the rational over the animal nature of man in the individual and social life through the study and observance of the moral law and the realisation of the self and the development of personality ; (3) an efficient and beneficent organisation of the members of society on the basis of justice and reason, securing

preservation of order and peace, maintenance of law and rights, imposing obligations on citizens and on the state, promoting the welfare of each and all through the spread of education and distribution of medicines and other charitable means. The more abundant and higher the development of these three factors in a society, the larger, the richer and stronger and more lasting will be the life of that society.

Now on a calm reflection it will be found that religion is the root of them all, in so far as it secures to each individual and to every race of mankind, those very qualities of head and heart which lead to the development of sciences and arts, and thereby to the conquest of nature by the human spirit, and also lead to the moral victory of character over instincts and impulses of the moment, and in so far as it is religion again that reconciles egoism and altruism and harmonises the ends of the individual with those of the community.

For example, (a) the triumph over nature which scientific geniuses of the world are helping to win for the human soul depends on

a study of the Book of Nature, on the observation of natural phenomena, on the discovery of the laws of nature, on the knowledge of the origin and the conditions of development of the physical life and of the processes of animal evolution on earth. But these are possible only when the human mind is perfectly disciplined in the art of self-control and restraint of senses, in the habit of concentration of mind and minute observation of all relevant facts by shutting out all disturbing factors, when the scientific investigator can free himself from all passions and prejudices and blind regard for customs and dogmatic acceptance of time-honoured traditions, when he can persist and persevere in the search for truth in the teeth of all oppositions from his best relations and friends as well as from the hostile members of the orthodox society, when he can detach himself altogether from all distracting activities and all alluring temptations and dedicate himself entirely to the cause of the advancement of knowledge and pledge himself to an unflinching devotion to, and disinterested love for truth, the whole truth and nothing

but the truth.—Now, are not these requisite qualities for scientific and philosophical researches also the very virtues which religious practices of prayer and adoration and meditation and communion with God involve and inculcate ?

(b) Similarly, the wealth of character and the dignity of human personality, which constitute the moral factor of social progress and secure the triumph of the rational over the animal nature of man, also involve the knowledge and observance of the moral law, obedience to the will of the Universal Self, or pursuit of and devotion to the common good, wisdom and insight, reverence and gratitude, humility and meekness, loyalty, faith, hope and purity, as well as courage, steadfastness, heroic determination to resist evils, to fight against injustice and to establish the cause of righteousness, readiness to suffer privations and persecutions for the sake of truth and freedom, the spirit of independence, as against the authority of customs and traditions and laws where they infringe the bounds of reason and clash against the

voice of conscience ; and these are the qualities which are best displayed in the lives of truly religious men and have been enjoined and encouraged by all the great religions of the world.

(c) Lastly, all the social virtues,—love and charity, spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the instinct for social service and philanthropic activities, the impulse to reform the evils of society—are intimately connected with religious consciousness. It is religion that teaches man to be fearless against death and to have a faith in the unseen Reality above the visible world and in the immortality of the soul and a life beyond the grave. It is religion that supplies the key-note to moral progress which consists in making real what is ideal, in translating into words and actions in the world of space and time, what inspires from within the heart in the shape of the ideas of truth and beauty, and goodness and harmony in the spiritual order. But for the feeling of the unity of the Universe in and through the one Spirit behind the many, but for the realisation of the unity of all men

and women as children of one Father, which religious culture with its congregational worship and prayer in assembly helps to foster, the ideal of the solidarity of the human race and the unity of national life, the conception of the divine rights of the people and the watchwords of liberty, equality and fraternity would have hardly arisen at all. Whether we take the position of women in society as the standard of civilisation, or the treatment of infants and widows, of the lame and the blind, of the diseased and the disabled, and of the dumb millions of backward classes, as the index of progress in a civic organisation, it is religion alone with its emphasis on the value and dignity of the individual soul, with its recognition of the merits and claims of the poorest and the lowliest and the lost, with its inculcation of the moral virtues of justice and benevolence, with its care of and consideration for the weaker, the gentler, the more helpless and the more dependent members of the race—that can rightly be regarded as the vital factor and the chief promoter, nay, the *sine qua non* of any advancement in the ideal of civilisation and civic life.

If the progress of civilisation can be measured by the humanising of the brutal instincts and impulses in man, we may represent further progress of society made through religion along the same lines as the refining and rationalising of human nature. The state is masculine, says Bluntschli, and the church is feminine. The all-sided perfection of society can be achieved only through the union of both these masculine and feminine forces, by supplementing the firmness and sternness of the one with the tenderness of emotions and love and sympathy of the other. Now, the value and importance of religion lies just here, viz., in its inculcation and cultivation of those virtues in man which enable him to go "with" the current of universal life, and to rise higher and higher in the scale of being, passing from the stage of animality through the gate of humanity to the rank of an angel, till he realises his perfection in Divinity. It is this truth that Benjamin Kidd tries to express in a somewhat distorted way when he makes religion the supreme factor in social evolution, in so far as it makes the individual

subservient to the needs of the race and in so far as nature eliminates those races which develop anti-religious and egoistic tendencies and selects as the fittest to survive in the struggle for existence those nations in which the individuals of the religious type of life and mind preponderate. Religion is thus a vital or biological necessity for society in more than a metaphorical sense.

If religion is to retain its hold on the social life of man in the modern age, as it should from purely sociological and philosophical considerations mentioned above, and as it actually did in the past, it must come out of the temples and shrines, and concern itself in the everyday affairs of the world, identify itself with the common duties of men in the family, in the workshop and in the state no less than in the church. A religion to be practised in the world must not only theoretically recognise the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, but see in every man and woman a worthy son and daughter of God, and help to make of every home a veritable temple of God and to turn every social institution

into an outward manifestation of the invisible kingdom of God. All the religious practices, the forms of worship, the habits of prayer, the moral disciplines and the various means of spiritual culture, should be so directed as to develop the social virtues of men and to foster the spirit of social reform and social service, and to produce in the mind of every worshipper or seeker after spiritual life a vivid consciousness of the unity of life and a realisation of the sense of fellowship not only among the members of the congregation or the community to which he belongs, but of the whole human race, irrespective of creed, caste and colour. The religion of the modern age must not draw any hard and fast distinction between the material and the spiritual needs of life, between the means of livelihood and the ways of holy living, but recognise the harmony of the flesh and the soul, the unity of the temporal and the eternal, and see in the finite interests and particular occupations of men the eternal significance of Divine love and the constant outflowing of the Infinite and Universal Spirit. The man of the world will learn

from such a religion the sublime lessons that to live is to pray, and to enjoy is to obey, that the works of tilling the ground, digging mines, weaving cloths and tanning leather are not less dignified than those of "chanting and singing and telling of beads", and that to enter into married life and to be blessed with children is not less sacred than the conducting of Divine service and the preaching of a sermon by a celibate priest in a temple or a church. Such a religion is no doubt most difficult to practise, but religion is not easy, nor can it be made easy and simple like a text-book in Arithmetic or Algebra meant for schoolboys. The glory of a religion lies in overcoming obstacles, and the value of a religious order is to be judged by the extent to which it can rise above the world, while living in the world.

The ministers of a religion of the modern age and the missionaries of modern times cannot regard themselves as keepers of everyone's conscience, and behave themselves in a conceited and arrogant manner, as if they were born to elevate and expose others. No, the preachers of religion must observe the golden motto of "Judge not", and reform and

heal themselves. It is now recognised that religion is best preached, not by talking much at the top of one's voice, nor by praying in the public, but by secret and silent influences, which come of sacredness of life and purity of heart. The very touch, the very look, the very smile, the very appearance of a holy and devout person is soothing, reassuring and inspiring, and imparts strength and courage, beauty and grace, nay infuses a new life and spirit into the hearts of those who come in his contact. There is hardly any need of a sermon or a lecture, for a man can but preach himself, and as much of religion and humanity and godliness there is in him will emit a sweet fragrance and shed a glorious lustre around ; his body will veritably be a sacred temple and his spirit will shine like a jewel by its own light and penetrate the darkness of ignorance and reveal the black spot of impurity in the minds of his disciples or followers. Himself free from the taints of worldliness and vanity and pride and all other vices and temptations, such a servant of God, with his spirit of lowliness and love and forgiveness, will save others from the paths

of misery and shame, ruin and degradation, and lead them onward to the highest realisation of their spiritual destiny. Thus the prophets and saints of the modern age must be men of the world, fighting the evils of society in the thick of battles, keeping themselves in the fore-front of the army as leaders and captains in war as well as in service for the social, political and economical salvation of their fellow-men.

Let us consider a little more minutely how the religious man of the modern age finds in the important units of social life—in the family, in the communal organisation and in the state—the best means for the satisfaction of his innermost spiritual craving and for the realisation of the highest ideal of religious culture.

The home is the first school for learning moral discipline and the family is the best field for the display and cultivation of the tender qualities of the human heart. In work and play, in love and service, the members of a family get to know one another more intimately and are united with one another more inseparably than anywhere else. It is

here in the family, especially in the life of a married couple, that lessons of mutual give-and-take, of losing oneself and forgetting oneself, of sacrificing not only one's pleasures and comforts, and wealth and freedom, but one's uttermost all, are most easily learnt, and it is here too, that the wealth of grace and beauty that dwells in right conduct, in the service of others, in patience and forgiveness and charity, is most spontaneously acquired. Nothing could be more helpful to the spiritual culture of man than the birth of a new child. The entrance into our home of an angelic beauty, directly dropped as it were from the paradise to the lap of the mother, marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the household as well as in the life of its parents,—an era of joy and blessedness, of peace and goodwill among all the relations and neighbours of the family, and an era of renewed love and redoubled happiness, coupled with a sense of fresh duties and responsibilities in the conjugal life of the parents. What is this child—so sweet, so lovely!—A thousand and one pleasant memories and pathos of tenderness, hallowed

by hoary traditions and sanctified by religious observances, are associated with the event of the birth of a child in the home. In the life of a child the spiritual and the natural, the ideal and the real, the Infinite and the finite inseparably blend, and all the beauties of sights and sounds and tastes, of sweet fragrance and delicate touches and all the sweetnesses of love and affection are discovered in their concentrated form and realised in experience, when one warmly embraces and kisses a child and enjoys its tender form through all the gates of the senses. The child comes to us like a homeless, helpless, hungry and naked stranger, crying for food and cloth and shelter, and depending entirely on our loving care and delicate nursing and devoted service. A religious man would welcome this child not only as the choicest blessing from on high but as the veritable representative of God on earth ; and similarly the child should be taught to regard its parent as the representative of the divine Father. The description of the last judgment in the Bible (St. Matthew, Ch. 25, verses 34—40),

according to which the kingdom of Heaven is prepared for and inherited by those who render services to one of the least of their brethren, seems to apply very appropriately to those parents who minister to the bodily needs and comforts of their children with devout care and attention ; for, the child can truly say of its parent, "I was an hungered and ye gave me meal, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me. I was sick and ye tended me". And we may well imagine the Divine Spirit speaking to each parent : "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these citizens of the kingdom of Heaven (meaning the children), ye have done it unto me". It is no wonder therefore that we find the hardest heart showing unexpected signs of mildness and softness and melting in love and sweetness of affection at the approach of a child. In celebrating the birthday of his baby the close-fisted miser learns to give away his valuable treasures, so that the gold and silver coins, which ordinarily gravitate towards the coffer, lose their

weight and become as light as a piece of straw, to be scattered all around, at the very touch of the gentle breeze of a father's tender love. The military officer forgets all his sternness of discipline, lays aside his rough exterior with the sword and the uniform, and becomes a changed man altogether, when he enters his home and welcomes the new-born baby on the mother's lap. "The Highest Being", says Carlyle, "reveals himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Un-named ? "There is but one temple in the Universe", says the devout Novalis, "and that is the Body of Man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before man is a reverence done to this Revelation in the Flesh. We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human body. * * We are the miracle of the miracles—the great inscrutable mystery of God."* If this is true of the adult man, how infinitely more true of the child, the nearest approach to a perfect image of God !

The home is thus really a school for

* On Heroes and Hero Worship.

the education of the soul-life or the kitchen where the nourishing food-stuffs for the spirit of man are prepared. In the family the human soul finds a stable ground, a fertile soil for the growth of its inner life, as well as the light and sunshine of love and hope and joy, which can elevate it above its earthly surroundings. The responsibilities of family life with the play of tender emotions and noble sentiments, the exercise of self-control and forbearance, the cultivation of a sense of fellowship, mutual regard and loyalty and devotion, for which the home supplies us with abundant scope, serve to concentrate the stores of energy hidden in the soul, and to focus all the divergent lines of human interest to a point in order to create a new power that can work miracles, a new light that can illumine all darkness and radiate sparks of spiritual life all around. The family is the brain and the heart of the social organisation, and it is in the home that the beauty and sweetness of life and the highest blessings of God are revealed in their noblest form. Religion cannot be perfected except under the healthy and

purifying influence of the home and the family life.

Next to the family, the part played in religious culture by such voluntary associations as the various societies, leagues, and clubs, into which men naturally group themselves is the most important. As Emerson says, "The flame of life burns too fast in pure oxygen and nature has tempered the air with nitrogen. So thought is the native air of the mind, yet pure it is a poison to our mixed constitution, and soon burns up the bone-house of man, unless tempered with affection and coarse practice in the material world.....But our tonics, our luxuries, are force-pumps which exhaust the strength they pretend to supply ; and of all the cordials known to us, the best, safest and most exhilarating, with the least harm, is society ; and every healthy and efficient mind passes a large part of life in the company most easy to him.

"We seek society with very different aims, and the staple of conversation is widely unlike in its circles. Sometime it is facts,—running from those of daily necessity to the last

results of science ; sometimes it is love and makes the balm of our early and of our latest days ; sometimes it is thought..... sometimes a singing,...sometimes experience. With some men it is a debate.....Neither do we by any means always go to people for conversation..... 'Tis only presence which we want. But one thing is certain,— at some rate, intercourse we must have.....

“The clergyman walks from house to house all day all the year to give people the comfort of good talk. The physician helps them mainly in the same way, by healthy talk giving a right tone to the patient's mind. The dinner, the walk, the fireside, all have that for their main end.

“See how Nature has secured the communication of knowledge: 'Tis certain the money does not burn more in a boy's pocket than a piece of news burns in our memory until we can tell it. And in higher activity of mind, every new perception is attended with a thrill of pleasure, and the imparting of it to the other is also attended with pleasure. Thought is the child of the intellect, and this child is conceived with joy and born with joy.

"Conversation is the laboratory and workshop of the student. The affection or sympathy helps. The wish to speak to the want of another mind assists to clear your own." (Essay on Clubs).

It is not merely the physical and intellectual life of man that depends on the existence of communal organisations, Churches, Samajes etc. ; the latter are equally essential to the growth of fellow-feeling, or the spirit of brotherhood, which is the basis of religious and moral life. It is through national self-consciousness and corporate activities that men learn how to widen their selves, to dedicate their energy and devotion bit by bit to the common good, and thus to merge their individuality in the universal spirit. The culture of the soul is best secured by the ease and grace and refinement which come of the contact between personalities, and by the spirit of self-sacrifice and self-denial which is engendered by intimate fellowship and friendly relations in social life. Nay, the mutual service among chums in everyday life is but the diluted form of martyrdom and heroic self-renunciation, which must

like charity always begin at home. Man is so constituted by Nature and so developed by Providence that his mind passes naturally along an ever-widening and ever-deepening current of love and sympathy from the family to the Church and the State, and thence to God. The democratic spirit of the modern age presupposes a sense of common life, resting on a common body and animated by a common soul, running through all the individual members of a community; and what could be more helpful to the growth of the religious spirit than this?

Reading newspapers is to be regarded as no less sacred, a duty in these days than attending a church or studying scriptures, for it is through the newspapers that we extend our sympathies to our fellow-men, take interest in what happens outside our narrow circles of relatives and friends and acquaintances, identify ourselves not only with the weal and woe of our compatriots, but also with the progress of other nations in the remotest corners of the globe. Just as the railway trains and sea-going ships, telegraphs and telephones are killing distances and

bringing the peoples of different lands closer to one another, so are the newspapers serving to knit together as with a silver thread the interests of various communities, and thereby providing bonds of union as through an invisible nervous system between the hearts of nations living on the surface of the earth.

So with the State, which is but an organ for the realisation of the collective will of the community. Religiously viewed, the only form of Government which can realise the kingdom of heaven on earth is Theocracy, according to which every servant of the state, high or low, be he a member of the judicial, executive or legislative department of the administrative machinery, should recognise the Supreme Spirit as the Sovereign Lord over all, and regard himself as a humble agent of God, trying to carry out His commands in every action, and to fulfil in a devout spirit the duties with which he has been entrusted. In such an Ideal State, the highest posts would naturally be held by those who are most God-fearing and conscientious and gifted with divine insight into the laws of nature and the workings of the

human mind both in the individual and the social life. All other qualities of head and heart which constitute true statesmanship, viz., wisdom of decision, foresight, presence of mind, firmness of will, promptitude, broad-minded liberalism, quick grasp of the problems of a given situation, even-handed justice, large-hearted sympathy, and constructive imagination,—are but the outcome of the right attitude or frame of mind and of the right spirit of the agent in relation to the holy will of the Divine Master. Give me a handful of such devout souls, obedient to the Universal Will, and I shall put a permanent end to all the strikes and labour troubles, to all the forces of disorder and unrest, that make for the ruin of the modern civilised nations and threaten to undermine the foundation of the whole structure of human society all over the world. The religious minds of to-day should find in the State a worthy scope and vast opportunity for the promotion of spiritual ends, and allying themselves with scientists and philosophers, with men of intellect and men of action, try to secure a juster organisation and a better reconstruction of society,

based on the recognition of God as the Ruler and the Father of mankind, and of all men and women as equal subjects of His Kingdom and as beloved sons and daughters in His world-wide household. Let the members of the various religious congregations, temples and mosques, unite as one body and prepare the way for the realisation of the long-dreamt-of and long-put-off kingdom of Heaven on earth by making their various institutions and organisations powerful exponents of this lofty ideal, by turning the various states of the world into visible churches of God, by reconciling the conflicting modes of spiritual culture and harmonising the ends of all the scriptures and prophets. It is thus and not otherwise that religion can be realised in every human life and God's will can be fulfilled in the commonwealth of nations.

V.

SPIRITUAL LIFE AND ITS REALISATION.

The Power that fills the infinite space with an all-pervading ether, and decorates the canopy of the sky with millions of suns and moons, and planets and stars,—the Power that regulates the courses of the winds and the waves, and controls the forces of nature and the events of human society, is not to be conceived of as a blind lifeless machine, but as a conscious, intelligent subject that manifests itself as a Spirit who knows, feels and wills with an unerring wisdom, boundless love and firm resolve. It is this living Spirit that creates the Universe, sustains our life, and draws everything towards itself in the end. It is this Life spiritual that lends its splendour to the sun and the moon, to the lightning and the fire, and enters into the life of humanity and endows it with consciousness and reason, with love and holiness. Every movement of

our limbs, every passing thought in our breast, every secret drop of tears in our eyes, every noble aspiration in the depth of our heart is watched by it. Our body, our mind, our soul,—all that we call *ours* belongs to this Life Eternal. By what name shall we describe it? By what earthly relation shall we convey an idea of its nearness to us and its love and care for us? Father, Mother, Friend, Lord, Master, Preceptor, Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, All-seeing, All-knowing, All-ruling, Brahma, Vishnu, Jehova, Allah, God,—what language can comprehend that Supreme Being, what thought and imagination can overreach the height and the depth of that vast, infinite Spirit? The sages and seers describe Him as the Self of the self, the Mind of the mind, the Life of the life, as the very *Soul* of this universe,—nay, as the “I am” of our very consciousness. Let us meditate in silence over the unspeakable glories of that majestic, mysterious Being.

The life spiritual is distinguished at the outset from the life natural as the mental

from the physical. We have a material framework within which the soul is as it were engaged or imprisoned. Thus eating, drinking, sleeping and breathing, are natural functions belonging to the body, with which the mind or the soul is supposed to have little or nothing to do. But thinking, feeling, desiring, willing and reasoning belong to the constitution of the mind and are as such supposed to be the property of the spirit. Hence negatively the spirit is conceived to be all that the body is not ; there is a relation of mutual exclusion or opposition between the spiritual and the physical. The first notion therefore that we have of the spirit is about its negative attributes, which are defined by denying of it all the properties of material bodies. For example, the spirit is incorporeal, unextended, impenetrable and indivisible, immovable and unchangeable, imperceptible and without any sensible qualities. In plain language, the spirit can not be seen, nor heard nor touched, nor smelt nor tasted. It has no colour, no form, no sound, no smell. It can not be burnt, nor be cut,

nor be dried nor drenched, nor be increased nor diminished ; it is not subject to the laws of division and subtraction, nor exhausted by our taking all out of it, for, unlike the contents of a material body, the more you take out of it, the more it has yet to give. It is neither in space nor in time, is not subject to motion or change, and therefore can not be destroyed. In other words, it is infinite, eternal and immortal.

When the spiritual is thus opposed to the physical, there is a tendency to identify the former with the mental. But it requires little thought or effort of imagination to realise that not all that is mental can be referred to the sphere of the spirit. We have our instincts and impulses, our passions and desires, our emotions and sentiments, which do not necessarily spring from the heights of our spiritual consciousness. We have thus to distinguish within the mental hemisphere itself an element that is spiritual and something that is non-spiritual, the latter being designated or comprehended under the wide term *natural*. The spirit is here placed in opposition to nature both in the

individual and in the social life. All that a man does under the natural impulse of self-seeking or instinct of self-preservation and under the domination of such natural emotions and sentiments as family affection or love of wife and children or respect for the customs and traditions of the tribe or community, are considered to be unworthy of being elevated to the rank and dignity of the spiritual. In this sense, it is *natural* to give as much as you take and to do as you are done by, but it is *spiritual* to give more than you take and to do more than one has done to you. *The spirit is not satisfied with what is, but strives forward to attain what ought to be.* It is not attracted by the enjoyment of natural objects nor repelled by aversion from them ; it is not led by fear or by attachment, but by the standard of justice and righteousness. Nay, it goes further ; it does not perform actions as demanded by duty, but as prompted by the inner disposition of virtue. In the sphere of the spirit the Ethics of Naturalism finds itself utterly inadequate and even fallacious, for, the good of the spirit, unlike an external good or

natural happiness, is not self-centred but admits of participation by all rational beings at the same time and in the same degree, so that the good of each is the good of all, and the increase of spiritual values in possession of one individual does not involve a diminution in the shares of others.

From this opposition between the natural and the spiritual, we pass on to a still more subtle distinction corresponding to a transition from ethics to religion. Even the higher duties and virtues directed towards the perfection of men and the betterment of the world are considered to be too coarse and undignified for the fine and ethereal substance of the spirit. Whatever belongs to the world cannot be of the spirit, which is concerned more with the eternal than with the temporal, more with the Infinite than with the finite, more with the heaven than with the earth. The invisible kingdom of God in which the spirit delights to dwell is far removed from the mundane universe, in which the soul of man seems to be imprisoned for three score years and ten. Thus the spirit and the spiritually-minded are anti-social and ascetic by

their habits and temperament, and other-worldly in their thoughts and aspirations.

A truer and higher view of the spiritual life is maintained by those who, instead of opposing it to the physical and the natural, rather elevate it above the material, the corporeal, the natural and the temporal. Freedom and knowledge, love and joy, which characterise the spirit, at once raise its status to the dignity of the member of a higher supersensible order. Thus while everything belonging to the physical or the material world is subject to necessary laws, which bind all that belongs to nature, the spirit alone is free, and as such, above all natural laws. It is the principle of intelligence, thought, reason, or self-consciousness, to which the whole universe of life, matter and mind is related as an object to the subject. It is the eternal thinker of all thoughts, the knower of all that is known. If we can speak of every object in nature that "it is," the spirit alone has this proud prerogative and this unique privilege that not only can we assert its existence in the third person and say "it is," but it can also

assert itself in the unique proposition with a subject in the first person, and say, "I am" or "I know". In fact, as Descartes held long ago, the very possibility of knowledge or thought implies the actuality of a thinking or knowing subject. "*Cogito ergo sum*"—I think, therefore I exist. The spirit thus belongs to a higher region than nature in that the former is the perceiver while the latter is perceived; the former sees, hears and feels, while the latter is seen, heard and felt. This difference is implied in the notion of transcendence of the spirit. Plato and Kant have made us familiar with a transcendental world, which is beyond space and time, above sense and understanding, and to which the natural world of our knowledge and action is related as a phenomenon to the thing-in-itself, as an appearance to reality or as the world of sense-particulars and individuals to the world of Ideas and universals. Here also the relation between spirit and nature is one of opposition.

Lastly, we come to a synthesis of all the views relating to the spiritual in a truer and a higher conception, in the light of

which the spirit is seen to be immanent in nature, in our body, and in every particle of matter, and yet not identical with any of the latter. That is to say, the spirit pervades nature and is yet distinct from nature ; it is in the body and yet it is not the body. It is rather the ruling, the determining, the guiding factor in nature and in the body ; it is the formative or the creative principle of the world, and cannot therefore be wholly transcendent. It enters into all and penetrates all. It is the mind of our mind, the soul of our soul ; it is that which uses our organs and directs our senses, which controls our attention and guides our thought, which resolves nobly, aims unerringly, and carries out its ends with a steadfast purpose. It is that which creates for us a world of imagination, and elevates us to the world of Ideas, and thereby enables us to have a direct vision of Truth, Beauty and Goodness that form the innermost essence of Reality. The Hindu sages characterise the Spirit as *Sat*, *Chit* and *A'nanda*. It is for them the principle of unity underlying knowing, being and

enjoying. That is to say, it exists, it is conscious and its essence is joy. As the principle of Being, it is distinguished from non-being or the void ; it is free from all wants, imperfections and limitations, which are of the nature of non-being. As it is above time and space and yet pervades all space and all time by its all-filling existence, it is rightly conceived as Infinite and Eternal. As the principle of consciousness, it is all light without any darkness, it is perfect knowledge, clear and distinct perception, adequate and complete understanding, pure and practical reason, it is full of insight and foresight, so that all objects are to it as transparent as a bright and clean mirror ; it is therefore not subject to any doubt or hesitation, nor to the vagueness and obscurity of ignorance and imperfect and inadequate knowledge. In one word, it is the spirit of comprehension and consistency, of truth and harmony in knowledge. Lastly, the spirit manifests itself in joy or bliss which is the source of all beauty and goodness in nature and human society. It is from this joy of the spirit that artistic creations

emanate. Thus poetry and music, painting and sculpture, architecture and mechanical inventions owe their origin to the fullness of spiritual life, which is essentially joy itself.

Theoretically no doubt the life of the spirit is regarded as being split up into two distinguishable but inseparable units—the Universal and the individual, the Infinite and the finite. But in the practical realisation of life, both in the kingdom of nature and of the human mind, these two elements are found to blend and intermingle so easily and gracefully that one may rightly consider them as different ways of looking at the same thing, or as two aspects of one and the same indivisible whole. Let us reflect for a while on the nature and mutual relation of these two aspects of reality and see how the Universal is manifesting itself in the particular, the Infinite is realising itself in the finite, and how the Absolute is descending into the sphere of relativity and limiting itself in the play of numberless individuals, in the world of natural phenomena as well as in the innermost recesses of human life.

To understand the Spirit Universal, we must realise the spirit individual. The finite is but the mirror of the Infinite, and he who knows the former knows the latter also to some extent. The soul is the be-all and end-all of human existence. Man is out in quest of the spirit ; he is thirsting and hungering and pining after the immortal life of the soul. Man does not live by bread alone, and the possession of all the mines of gold and silver and of all the principalities of the world will not satisfy him. In spite of the bloody wars and revolutions that are going on around us, in spite of the materialistic tendencies of the age and the consequent evils of modern society, it is the spiritual force that is asserting its right to supremacy everywhere, and it is the fullness of spiritual life towards which individuals and nations are endeavouring to move. The body of man, its health, its strength, its nourishment, its beauty and grace,—all these things have their value derived from the inner life of the spirit. Nay, the earth and the sun, the moon and the stars, the sky and the clouds, the air and the fire, the oceans and the rivers,

the mountains and forests,—all must find their final meaning and fulfilment in the creation and manifestation, in the development and maintenance of the soul. The whole of Nature is working ceaselessly towards this supreme end,—the manufacture of souls. Light, heat and moisture, and electric and magnetic forces are entering into the composition of the soil, in order that it can produce and sustain living seeds and plants. The earth, like a loving mother, is bearing all the pangs of fertilisation and cultivation in order that she may generate the herbs and crops that are necessary to feed the creatures of God, who are members of the spiritual kingdom. The vegetables are offering themselves as sacrifices for the nourishment and growth of animals, and the whole of the animal kingdom—including birds and beasts, worms and insects—is busy preparing the environments, the fields and the homes in which the spiritual life of man can thrive. Man himself is rising slowly and gradually step by step from the level of brutes and savages to the stage of civilised manhood, and thence again to the rank of divinity, which is the birth-right of the soul.

Thus the world of matter, life and mind is one continuous whole adapted to the needs of the spirit, which comprehends the nutritive and vital functions of the body, the sensitive and intellectual functions of the mind and the intuitive and spiritual activities of the soul. Nothing in the world is foreign to the soul, nothing is hostile and contrary to its growth and working. All that is visible and all that lies outside the range of our vision, the whole of the sensible world and the world that transcends the borders of our senses—"the whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth"—are organic, helpful, and useful to the spirit of man. Just as the vitality of the seed can and does overcome the obstacles to its growth, presented by the hard, stony, rocky grounds and by the neighbouring prickles and shrubs, and can and does grow towards light and air, by the sheer force of its potentialities, so can and does the soul of man thrive and prosper in an unfavourable climate and surrounding, overcoming all the hindrances put in its way by an apparently alien nature with her step-motherly and niggardly provisions, and

by an wilfully obstinate society with its inhuman and inhospitable gang. When there is a flow-tide in the spirit, man is enabled to use his body as a steamboat and to steer along the waves of the senses with perfect ease and dignity, with complete calm and security; but when there is an ebb-tide in the spiritual life, the same man is not even allowed to hold the rank and enjoy the privilege of a petty sailor but needs must plod his way through the rocky and shallow waters of life like a poor ship-wrecked traveller, stranded on a solitary island and carrying a dead body on the shoulder. Verily, it is the divine spark of the celestial fire—the element of spirit—that keeps man alive and awake, active and cheerful; and it is by the presence of the same fire within his breast that man breathes and moves, takes food and digests, and performs all his physical and mental functions.

The inner life of the spirit has its laws of growth and development, of decline and death. The spirit in its essence is Energy, Power, Force,—the highest manifestation of which is to be found in the human will. This is the first and the best expression of a

man's spiritual life,—that the man is a living embodiment of energy, an incarnation of power, a store-house of active-force, a reservoir of strength of will, which is rooted in and perfects itself in character. Thus inertia, dullness, lifelessness, laziness, mere conformity to a dead routine or custom, bondage to law and habit, servile adherence to conventions and usages and opinions,—these are just the opposite of the life spiritual, which is a life of absolute freedom, of unbounded enthusiasm, of supreme beauty, of transcendental love and divine joy. Joy is the very life and substance of the spirit, and measures all other characteristics. There is as much power and freedom, love and beauty, purity and nobility in the soul, as there is an efflux of spontaneous joy in the heart out of heaven's inexhaustible spring. The Rishis of the Upanishads found in *A'nandam* or bliss the highest and the truest manifestation of Brahma or the Universal Spirit. Wherever there is impotence and inertia, depression and despair, grief and sorrow, fear and anxiety, we may presume that the spirit has fled away from there and that the

life of the individual has been degraded to the mere routine movement of a machine. Failure and disappointment, poverty and misery, shame and disgrace befall and overwhelm the man, in whom the inner spirit has already sunk to the low level of the ebb-tide.

Besides energy and joy, there is another sign of the spiritual life which manifests itself in the form of divine light within. It is the element of intuition and insight—or clear vision—into the real nature of things. The spirit of man can penetrate into the mysteries of nature and unveil the secrets of the human mind without the aid of a scientific instrument, a telescope or a microscope, nay, without any observation and experiment. For, the spirit is the transparent mirror in which the whole world, the inner as well as the outer, is clearly reflected. It elevates man above all doubts and unbeliefs, above all vaguenesses and obscurities of ignorance and false or confused knowledge. It reveals to us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Hence the age-long prayer of the human soul :—“Lead me from untruth to

truth, from darkness unto light, and from death to life everlasting." Thus *power*, *joy* and *light*—these three sum up the attributes of the life of the spirit. From these three can be deduced the infinite varieties of form and colour, of music and fragrance, of sweetness and delicacy, of love and beauty, of sincerity and holiness, of virtue and goodness, which adorn and beautify, elevate and sanctify the soul, and turn her into a veritable image of God. It is this divine life of the spirit—the life of power, of knowledge, of joy—and that in abundance, in an infinite degree and for an eternal age—that is implied in man's longing for perfection.

The soul likes to create its own environments. The body with its sense-organs and limbs, the dwelling-house with its inmates, old and young, the society with its complex organisations, the church with her benevolent institutions, the whole universe of nature and choir of heaven—are parts and parcels of the spiritual atmosphere in which the soul-life can thrive and prosper. The soul delights to dwell on the material elements, and finds its nourishment in them. It transforms the physical and makes it

transparent as glass ; it moulds the vital and biological principle and makes it subservient to its spiritual ends. Verily, the spirit-life is a miracle-worker, a magic spell, a mystery of mysteries and a wonder of wonders.

As the fish feels at home in the waters, as the bird rejoices to fly in the air, so does the soul realise its highest bliss, its eternal repose, in the Spirit Universal. The infinite ocean of love, the all-pervading atmosphere of holiness, the eternal light of wisdom provides the soul with its life-sustaining, life-nourishing, life-strengthening food and drink in the bosom of the Spirit Universal. The more the human spirit dives into the depth of the Life Divine, the more does it take within itself the substance of its own existence and development from the eternal and inexhaustible store-house of Energy, Light and Joy, and the more does it partake in the omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, in the all-goodness, all-love and all-holiness of the Infinite Spirit. It is filled with a new sense of delight in the very act of living, and blessed with a new vision of the beauty of things, a new faith

in the moral constitution of the Universe, a new hope of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, and a new enthusiasm in the service of the members of this Divine order. Such a man sees the Spirit Universal in each and every individual, and sees all things, great and small, animate and inanimate, in the all-embracing love of the Infinite Being. His faith in the moral Government of the Universe reveals to him the truth of the immortality of the soul, and inspires him with a reverence and awe for the majesty of the Moral Law, which meets every action, every word, nay, every thought in the bosom of man with its appropriate desert, and never allows a single disposition or act of transgression to pass unnoticed and without a compensation in the spiritual world. He experiences the loving touch of the Divine Spirit in the tender and affectionate embrace of his dear wife and friends, and in the sweet kisses of his beloved children; and the whole drama of life is translated by his vision of faith into an unceasing flow of Divine Grace. Nor is nature's beauty without its significant message for him of

the unseen world beyond. Every ray of sunshine at the dawn of the day, every shade of twilight tinged with crimson paints, beautifying the eastern and western horizons, will fill his hearts with ever-new delights at the sight of the smiling face, as it were, of a long-remembered friend. The soothing moonlight, the starry firmament, the majestic and sublime range of mountains, the surging waves of the blue waters, the floating clouds above and the gliding streams below, the terrible silence of the solitary forests, broken by the fluttering of the leaves at every blowing of the breeze, and the sweet melody of the chirping birds, the fragrant flowers and the juicy fruits—all these grand spectacles of nature impressing on the ears and the eyes, and delighting the senses and imagination alike, convey to the eager soul a loving message from the omnipresent Spirit. The forces of nature and the laws of nature, apparently indifferent to the interests of man, as well as the seemingly lifeless and heartless movements of the particles of matter, so general in their scope and so regardless of the individual,—are all for him embodiments of influences and

tendencies emanating from the boundless ocean of Divine Love, which affect for good or for evil every human soul according to the way in which they are accepted by the latter. Every individual has a unique existence and a unique mission and goal of life, and so has every blade of grass and every grain of dust a unique value and unique meaning for him. There is no wholesale dealing and monopoly prices of truth and love and goodness in Nature, but the Universal Spirit is a retail dealer, trading and conversing with each humble customer according to his means and resources; and what appears to the scientists or statisticians as a general law, or a common rule for the average man, is in reality the inverse reading of a fact which is through and through unique for each individual. Thus is the kingdom of Nature transformed in the light of spiritual life into a realm of ends, a kingdom of Heaven, for the welfare and perfection of souls. The spirit is above time and space, above social standing and profession, above wealth and rank, above political laws and religious creeds, above all customs, traditions

and conventions of the community. It is not limited by the manners of the times or the usages of the locality. It draws its life-blood from the Fountain of truth, love and holiness, which is no respecter of persons, but opens itself to all, who are pure in heart and accept the sovereignty of the *Moral Law*. Hence the richness of the poor in spirit, through their vision of the Infinite and Eternal in their own hearts. Thus the life of the spirit confers a new dignity, a divine glory upon each humble individual, nay, upon each minute thing in nature, in so far as each is an expression of the Infinite. If it deifies atoms and dust particles, and germs and cells, will it not deify the farmer and the weaver, the carpenter and the blacksmith, the miner and the mill-hand, the sweeper and the cobbler? Dignity of labour, worship through work, holiness of the commonest and the lowliest of our duties,—are but the necessary outcome of the recognition of the spirit behind the man. For a man is not made sacred by what he does, but by how he lives ; man is not polluted by what he eats, but by what comes out of his inner life.

There is no occupation, however lowly, but the spirit of man can elevate into the receptacle of the Divine energy and grace flowing from on high. There is not a single home, even in the poorest and most wretched surrounding, which the spiritual light cannot illumine and transform into a veritable sanctuary of God. There is not a human body in the most depressed community, which the soul-life cannot purify and raise to the dignity of a sublime and majestic temple of the most Holy. The spirit can penetrate into the darkest corner of the human mind and the innermost recesses of the human heart, and so dominate the various walks, interests and departments of the human life, that the food that we eat, the water that we drink, the clothes that we wear, the words that we utter, the thoughts that we think, the actions that we perform, the things that we handle, the paths that we cross, the vehicles that we use, the sights that we see, the songs that we hear, the scents that we smell, the delicious fruits that we taste, the soft and tender objects that we touch,—in fact, all the experiences of our daily life can serve as one unbroken thread

of communion with the Infinite ; and our heart and intellect can harmoniously co-operate in offering every movement of our body and mind as fit objects with which to worship the Supreme Being. Viewed in the light of the spiritual life, the whole of our being is a holy sacrament, a sacred bath in the stream of grace flowing from the feet of the Divine Spirit. The seer in his devout meditation and rapturous contemplation realises that the whole of this visible universe is in its true nature and inner meaning nothing but a sacred temple of the spirit, and that there is *Pujā, Ārati, Upāsana*, worship going on everywhere at all the moments of time. The sun, the moon and the stars are but lamps and the wide sky the plate, the flowers in the woods and fruits in the gardens are but Nature's humble offerings for this great *Fujā* in the temple of God. The mountains and oceans, the rivers and lakes, the valleys and deserts, the birds and beasts—all declare His glory and sing His praises in mad ecstasies, inviting the sons and daughters of men to join in this sacred and festive rejoicing. Rejoice, O ye sons of the

immortal Spirit, rejoice that the veil of darkness is removed, the light of the shining Deity has dawned on you, and the gates of Heaven are thrown open to you. Do ye realise that the Infinite has made Himself manifest in the finite, that the Eternal has condescended to play on the stage of the temporal, that the Invisible Beauty is piercing through the visible forms and colours of nature and the faces of men, that the heavenly music is making itself heard through the earthly songs, that the nectar of immortality is being freely offered for the taste of the mortal, and the touch of the Intangible has impressed itself on the tender and delicate limbs of the finite bodies of our beloved on earth. The barriers between the flesh and the spirit, the sensible and the supersensible are broken, and the Divine Spirit has burst its self-imposed limitation and chosen to reveal Himself in and through the spirit of man !

How are we to look upon this life on earth and to realise in it the living presence and constant activity of the Infinite and Universal Spirit ? Let us first of all reflect on the meaning and end of life.

Our life is real, it is not an empty dream. We are not mere ghosts or shadows but living spirits. There is a law behind all the events of life, there is a power that regulates all its joys and sorrows, and all its hopes and fears. Not a sparrow falls without the knowledge and the sufferance of the Being that is the author and the embodiment of the law. Man's commonsense view of life as gathered from his daily experiences should form the starting point of philosophy. What does a common man in the street feel about life ? The man who thinks this life to be an illusion and does not take things seriously is self-condemned. The vanity of human existence does not touch the eternity and immortality of the soul. You cannot build a stone wall on a sandy soil nor a castle in the air. If your life is transitory and there is no certainty about the morrow, why will you trouble yourself with the enduring and lasting materials of life ? Who would care for the state and its organisation, the mills and factories and all the arts and refinements of society, if the grip of death and destruction were constantly on our shoulders ? Hence

the feeling of repulsion and reproach with which every sound and healthy mind justly condemns any kind of revolution in human society. It is because life is not an illusion, that there is the need of fixed laws, and of the stability of social organisation.

The end of life is not wealth or happiness, nor reputation nor learning, but it is life itself,—a larger life, a more comprehensive and harmonious life. To live truly you must see clearly and distinctly the world and the self, or rather see the world in your self and your self in the world, and this is possible when your experience embraces the whole field of knowledge, and is in harmony with the claims of art and morality and religion. The religious ideal of God-consciousness and the religious practice of *yoga* or union with God sums up the goal and the method of the highest form of spiritual culture, which involves a harmonious synthesis of the world-consciousness and self-consciousness. Science is nothing but the revelation of God, science of Brahman or Theology being the queen of sciences. If the world is real only so far as it is

God-centred and interpenetrated by the Divine Spirit, and if the view of the world divested of its divine origin and divorced from the manifestation of God in it is verily an illusion, as has been rightly maintained by philosophers, it follows that all knowledge of the world is false which does not make us feel the presence of God within and without and which does not bring God nearer to our life. What is true of science is also true of morality and art. Art is the reproduction of the Infinite in the finite, and morality is the realisation of Brahma in action. It is the Good that makes things beautiful, lovable and enjoyable. The Good is behind everything in nature and society. God who reveals himself as the great "I am" in nature and as the inner self in man's consciousness, also declares Himself as the Good, as the soul of goodness in History and of beneficence in Nature. So science, art, and morality are all tributaries to the supreme science of God-consciousness and the sublime art of Yoga.

Let us look a little closer and see how the religious consciousness relates itself to all the elements of our moral and spiritual life.

All morality centres round self-realisation, which means on the one hand self-control or death to the life of sense and selfishness, and on the other hand self-knowledge or a sense of being united with our highest self which is in Brahma. The first is the condition of the second and yet presupposes the second, because it is the purity of heart alone that can qualify us for seeing God, and this purity of heart, though involving strength of will, is yet based on right knowledge, i. e. right discrimination between the permanent and the transitory, the true and the false, the good and the evil. But the power that drives the will into action and gives us an insight into reality is the feeling of love either for God, the Supreme Self, or for any finite creature, be it our wife or friend or mother or a fellowman. Hence knowledge, will, and love are interwoven into a single structure in the totality of human consciousness. To be religious means to be perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect, and that is to realise the total self, to have a fuller and richer life, nothing being neglected, no human interests being ignored, no desire

or instinct being refused its legitimate degree of satisfaction. Hence it is that a true religion also means a comprehensive, universal, tolerating, liberal, and unitary religion—including science, art, morality and philosophy in a coherent whole.

Immorality is only another name for injustice, which means not giving others what is due to them and taking more from others than is due from them. One-sidedness, partiality, narrowness of range, incoherence, inconsistency, contradiction—these are the characteristics of every act of injustice and of all moral evils. All these factors come under the general head of *selfishness* which implies making a concession for one's self-love in opposition to the universal will. Take for instance such vices as stealing, lying, breach of promise and cheating. They all arise from selfishness, and the perpetrators of these evils know that these are dangerous maxims if allowed to be turned into universal laws, but still they would like to make an exception to the law in their own favour ;—and this is injustice, this is self-love. Kant was right in formulating the moral

law as a maxim that can be made into a universal law of nature. But this is only another name for the old Indian precept of treating others in comparison with one's own self or the precept of "doing unto others as you would be done by," or what Jesus called 'love thy neighbour as thyself.' This is why in the Bhagavad-Gitá, equanimity, indifference to self-interest and equal regard for all are repeatedly enjoined as the greatest of all virtues. When one has given up selfishness, then is one at peace with the Supreme Self.

A man is seen at his truest, best and highest, when seen through the eye of love. Only the lover can discover the beauty that is hidden in the eyes, in the voice and in the limbs of the beloved. So the man who is bathed in love of God has the true vision of the beauty and loveliness of the universe and the holiness and perfection of humanity, in spite of all the so-called physical defects and moral evils. But love, it may be said, is subjective and individual, while the very nature of truth and justice is that one must get rid of all subjective feelings and passions and see things in their objective reality and

universal aspect. How are we to reconcile these conflicting points of view? Let us reflect.

Love is not something subjective in the sphere of feeling, but rather crystallised reason. From one point of view, even reason is subjective, in that it detracts from the totality of a thing by analysing it into its constituent elements and sees it through the prism of thought, excluding feeling and will (i. e. the aesthetic and teleological aspects of a thing). To this view of Reason corresponds the lower stage of love, when it is merely sense-bound, longs for contact, is full of passion, and leads to hatred, anger and illusion, when opposed or rejected. But there is a higher view of Reason, which presents to us a systematic unity of experience, in a coherent and consistent whole, and which is thus identical with Reality as such. So with love in its higher aspect. Love in that divine form is rational and universal; it is no mere attachment to a particular object but a specific attitude towards the universe as a whole, and for the matter of that, to its parts. Love sees things from the point of view

of the whole,—and this is why it can forgive and forget, can wait with patience and return coolness and contempt with kindness and grace, can overcome pride and passions, prejudices and partialities, can endure the heavy blows of neglect and indifference as well as disappointment and insulting rejection, can endure all trials and temptations, sorrows and griefs, dangers and difficulties without fear, can discover beauty in ugliness, sublimity in little things, and elements of goodness in things apparently evil and in persons supposed to be mean and base. It is with such an all-embracing and all-enduring love that the Divine Father meets every human soul. It is such a fullness of divine love that rewards the fullness of religious life.

Fullness of life and fullness of love are one and the same thing. Out of life cometh light, out of light cometh goodness, out of goodness beauty, and out of beauty love. Thus love is the fulfilment and the perfection of humanity. God is not merely the source of light and life, not merely is He goodness personified and beauty sanctified, but the highest conception of God that we mortals

have been allowed to form is that He is Love perfected. Hence our longing for the love of the Infinite ; He is the one object of love for all rational beings. So says Rishi Yájñavalkya : "It is not for the sake of the son, that we love the son, but it is for the sake of the A'tman or the Supreme Self that we love the son ; it is not for the sake of wealth that wealth is dear to us, but it is for the sake of the A'tman that wealth is dear to us." If we therefore do not long for God but for the earthly good, we are setting our heart on the wrong object or perhaps we are still seeking Him ignorantly. What do we lose, if we do not love or even do not believe in Him ? We lose just the fullness of life, the totality of our being, the perfection of our soul ; this is all that we miss in forsaking religion. A civilised man is supposed to be higher in the scale of existence than an uncivilised man, and in a civilised community a scholar ranks higher than an illiterate. But what if a scholar has no artistic sense, no aesthetic culture, no taste for poetry, music or painting ? So also a scholar, who has the refinement of an artist but whose religious

consciousness has not yet developed, stands in the hierarchy of humanity far below the religious man who is inspired with a sense of the presence of the Infinite as the realised ideal of Beauty, Truth and Goodness, or as the embodiment of moral perfection and love. In fact religion and art have much in common, and the former may be regarded as the highest form of aesthetic culture. Both of them are developed only at a very highly advanced stage of society and none of them are indispensable for the bare necessities of life. A race of mankind can flourish very well as regards the comforts and conveniences of life and even attain to a certain level of moral and intellectual progress, without ever entering into the sacred temples of art and religion. But it will be all the poorer and more imperfect as a race for all that, inasmuch as it cannot in that case rise to the height at which the Ideas of Beauty and Divinity are revealed ; it can not then experience the deepest of all spiritual realities—the love of God ; nor can it drink from the well of eternal life and attain the peace and joy that belong to the seer, when the veil

of ignorance is removed from before "the eye of the soul" and a new birth into a new world of everlasting light and beauty takes place.

Spiritual life attains its highest development and reaches its supreme perfection in the life of love. It is love that gives reality to life, supplies the zest for living, and sanctifies and magnifies all the details of everyday life. Look at the world from the point of view of the all-embracing love of the Divine Mother and nothing will be despised, nothing will be belittled. Joy springs from love, service springs from love, even knowledge is a product of love, albeit the former is also an essential condition of the latter. Beauty is where love is and beauty creates love. Beauty, Love and Joy—are the last words of Life.

Love makes man perfect, love makes man beautiful, love makes man sweet, love makes man happy. What is life without love? Love is the salt of the earth. Love that binds man and woman is the basis of society. In love we experience the highest state of our mind, the sublimest feeling that

our soul is capable of, and the tenderest emotion that vibrates in the human breast. Love is the cementing bond between individual and individual, between individual and society, between nation and nation. Love expands and grows till it embraces the whole humanity, nay the universe at large. Love is the consummation of our religion, the centre and the crown of our life. The lover brings before his beloved the gift of his life, so that she may dispose of it just as she likes. It is the property of the queen of his life. He offers this gift to her with all its defects and imperfections, with all its desires and inclinations, with all its hopes and disappointments. He travels from country to country in her quest, gathers laurels after laurels for her honour, and his life is one continuous stream of love and service to her. All that he has said, all that he has thought, all that he has done, all that he has yet to do, are dedicated to her. She is the final judge of all his works. So is the case with the lover of God. The highest view of life is the realisation of love and beauty of God. The Infinite plays with us in endless finite forms.

He comes to us as beauty, attracts our hearts with His magnetic force, enchants our mind, overpowers our senses and makes us His slaves. We give ourselves up entirely in the enjoyment of beauty as revealed in His finite forms and taste of the nectar of His sweetness and become immortal. We lose ourselves in the service of His lovely incarnations in human forms and learn the noblest and most sacred lessons of tenderness and delicacy, refinement and gentle manners. It is in the sight of His lovable beauty that our heart loses its hardness, our intellect its dryness, and our life flows in a gentle stream of purifying service and love. We are charmed by the nameless name and formless form of that Beautiful One. Our heart is captured by Him, we cannot get rid of His hold on us. How perfect and sweet is He ! How fragrant, how delicate is His touch, how graceful is His movement ! How soothing His music ! We are not ourselves but are transformed into His likenesses, into His servants, into His subjects. We would feign serve Him all our life, worship Him in the temple of

our heart. We love Him and are blessed in His love. We ask for nothing in return, we are satisfied in His love, and His sweet smile is a sufficient reward for us. He makes us free by binding us in His service. He gives us new life by taking us through the experiences of death and sacrifice for the sake of His love. He makes us purer, lovelier, sweeter, nobler and more beautiful by washing off all our evil thoughts, ugly forms, rude manners, ignoble desires and evil actions. He is supremely lovable and our intercourse with Him is supremely joyous. He makes everything beautiful, lovable, delightful around us. One moment of life with the Beloved bears the signet of eternity. His love reminds us of untold ages, unknown experiences, unheard of music. When we see Him not, we feel immensely miserable. When He is not with us, we do not love our work, the days seem to be dark, the world becomes shorn of all its charm and beauty, —we do not like to eat and drink, our nights are restless, and we do not sleep. When the Beloved is present in our home, we have zeal and earnestness

for work, then we can serve the poorest and the lowliest and the lost, and our heart is full of love and our life is so sweet. Whatever we eat and drink, touch and smell at that moment appears sweet and fragrant, as if they bear the touch of the Beloved. He is beautiful and this is why He is powerful too, for beauty is strength. Beauty is light and it gives us wisdom. Beauty is goodness and it gives us purity of moral life. Beauty is love, it makes us gentle and tender. When we see His beauty, then we understand nature and mind and the whole universe, for what could be the use and the ground of the reality of things but to be enjoyed by, and to form part of, the infinitely Beautiful? The hills and the valleys, the lakes and the rivers, the clouds and the wind, the sun, the moon, and the starry sky,—they are all there and they all come to be *for the sake of the revelation of beauty*. Thus Beauty is the unmoved mover of all things. It attracts every heart, but itself is not attracted by any. It is the magnet that draws to itself all the jarring and discording elements of reality. It is the

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prime mover which sets the world-process going, and it is also the ultimate goal to which everything is tending. Nature and history point towards the same end, viz. to the realisation of beauty. We are lovers and worshippers of beauty wherever it is, —in the snowy mountains, in the moon-lit night, in the glorious sunset, in the living plants and trees, in the whistling wind, in the flowing stream, in the murmuring waves of the sea and in the lovely face of man. We are absorbed in and possessed by beauty. We are charmed by His invisible supernatural beauty and seek His image in the visible world of man and nature. We long for His incarnation in the form of a human soul whom we may accept as our companion and love and worship in life. We want a larger and a fuller life, more loving life and a purer life, and this can be attained only if the supreme Beauty assume the form of flesh and blood, choose us as His lover and become our co-worker and fellow-traveller and companion in every walk of spiritual life. When we are filled by His love, touched and embraced by Him, we experience the joys of heaven on

earth. Then our heart spontaneously addresses the Lord as the Beloved and says :

“My Love ! if I have loved Thee well, why should I feel miserable ? Why should I feel the pang of separation ? Art Thou not ever with me as the object of my desires, as the satisfaction of all my longings ? Do I not touch Thee in all tangible things ? Do I not see Thee in everything visible ? Do I not hear Thy music in all the noise of the world ? Do I not kiss Thee in tasting all sweet fruits and eatables ? Art Thou not watching all my thoughts and desires, and frowning at all my shortcomings ? Dost Thou not jealously guard me against all impure connections ? O my Beloved, how beautiful Thy invisible form, how sweet Thy intangible embrace, how soothing Thy inaudible and unheard-of music ! How sweet art Thou, my Lord, how sweet is Thy house ! How sweet is Thy world and how sweet the life that Thou hast given me ! Sweet is Thy look, sweet is Thy smile, sweet is Thy touch and sweet is Thy embrace. Sweet is Thy voice, sweet is Thy song ; sweet is Thy taste and sweet is Thy smell ; sweet is Thy

sun, sweet is Thy moon ; sweet are Thy trees, sweet are Thy fruits ; sweet are Thy plants, sweet are Thy flowers and sweet are Thy roses ; sweet are Thy lakes, sweet are Thy hills, and sweet Thy valleys. Sweet are Thy creatures, sweet are Thy children. Sweet is Thy love, sweet is Thy music, sweet is Thy beauty. Everything is sweet above me, and everything is sweet below me. Thou art sweetness—infinite and inexhaustible !”

VI.

CULTURE OF THE SOUL.

All education is disciplining of life for death ; or an energising of the soul for the destruction, or in any case the transformation, of the present natural life in order that it may be born anew, and attain a truer and higher, better and nobler mode of being. Education cannot properly be completed, nay, it cannot even be begun without a spiritual regeneration or re-birth on the part of the pupil. Hence the ancient Hindu custom of subjecting every boy coming from one of the three higher classes to a process of preliminary discipline or *reformation* (*Saṅskāra*, as it is named), before he began his training in the house of a Preceptor. Not until he had undergone this primary *Saṅskāra*, could he acquire the right of calling himself a *Dvija* or twice-born,—an epithet of distinction which, like the term *Aryan* or *Greek*, connoted a higher culture and entitled the class bearing

this designation to a considerable amount of respect and privileges in society. Even in modern languages, education means *drawing out* the latent faculties of a man, or *forming*, building up or constructing (Erbildung, as the Germans call it) the entire humanity that is hidden behind the raw materials of one's body and mind.

Thus properly understood, education of the spirit implies a mental gymnastic, a vigorous exercise of all the constituent elements of the human soul, e. g. proper training of the eyes and the ears, regular control of the senses and feelings, reasonable restraint of the impulses and desires, purification of imagination and judgment, clarification of one's ideas and conceptions, the shaking off of one's passions and prejudices, and the bringing out of one's potential resources—intellectual, moral, religious and aesthetic. Even physical culture, games and athletics and gymnastic exercises are legitimately included within the sphere of the education of the soul.

But education is not merely exercise of the mind; it is more than a gymnastic of the spirit. For it is truly a cultivation, a develop-

ment, a growth, which involves furnishing of materials and nourishments from outside no less than the power of assimilation and digestion from within. It requires the sowing of seeds and provision of manure as well as cattle and implements for ploughing and the supply of rains and dew-drops and other moisture for fertilising the soil, of light and air to help the germination of the seed, and more than anything else, the vitality or the formative and creative force in the seed itself. The gardener is there to water the plants, to eliminate the tares and the wild shrubs, to prune the leaves, to remove all obstacles that retard or hamper the free spontaneous growth of the plants under cultivation. And when he has fulfilled his task to the best of his knowledge and ability, the rest is done by heaven's free gifts of sunshine and moon-light, by nature's inexhaustible supply of air and moisture. So is it with a teacher and his relation to the young souls entrusted to his care. On the part of the pupils, however, this cultivation implies a sort of penance or *tapasyá* ; as the Sanskrit proverb goes: "*Chhātrānām adhyāyanam tabas*" i.e. studying forms the penance

of students. It is a life of hard work, of rigorous duty, of austere discipline, requiring self-criticism and self-examination. One has to retire at times into solitude, and commune with Nature or rather with Nature's God through her ; one must often dive into the deepest recesses of one's heart in order to find out the Self, whose seat it is ; or look behind the body and its mechanism in order to discover the Spirit who rules them both.

Self-Knowledge is an indispensable preliminary to self-conquest or self-mastery or *swarāj*—which is the one sole object of education. "Know thyself" should be the motto of all earnest students who seek to attain self-rule. Have you ever detached yourself from the world of your ordinary intercourse ? Have you ever tried to cut yourself off entirely from your immediate friends and relations and surroundings ? Have you any idea as to what kind of picture of yourself and your life will present itself to you, once you are removed absolutely from your social environments ? If not, you have not yet tasted of the sweet fruits of retirement and solitude ; you have not as yet

enjoyed the blessings of contemplation on your own nature and your relation to the Divine Master who made you ; and you have no personal experience as yet of how far and how deeply your life is influenced and affected by the world around you and by the members of your own society. You are not only deprived of the most invaluable treasures on earth that our heavenly Father has placed at your disposal, but you are also denying yourself the right of entering into the sacred temple of knowledge, if you are not prepared to accept the vow of self-examination in solitude as the most elementary discipline of spiritual life during your pilgrimage to that sanctuary of learning. I am not here speaking of the habit of retirement and detachment incidental on the higher scientific researches or philosophical studies, nor of the love of solitude natural to creative artists ; but all these cases offer a fit parallel to the penance that a student must needs undergo for the education and the realisation of his self.

This regeneration or "second birth", which precedes the entrance of a seeker after spiritual life into the kingdom of the spirit,

requires at the outset an almost ascetic indifference and aversion to the pleasures of the world and even a considerable amount of endurance of pain and mortification of the body and the sense-organs, if need be. The importance of self-denial and self-sacrifice cannot be too highly estimated at this stage. Forget yourself, efface yourself, surrender yourself entirely before the altar of your Duty or Ideal or God, in the name of religion, patriotism, morality or whatever else you may call it. To turn yourself away from the thought of the self, you may seek the company of saints and sages, living or departed, in a religious congregation or a library of devotional literature; you may also keep yourself engaged in thinking noble thoughts and doing noble deeds; you may love and serve your fellows with body, mind and soul by attending them in their sick-bed, by reading interesting stories or instructive articles from magazines and newspapers to them, by helping them in need and distress with food, clothes or money, by looking after their comforts and conveniences, by consoling them in their

affliction with the healing balm of sweet words and kind, that may fill their hearts with hope and faith and cheerfulness. Thus paradoxical as it may seem, society is even more helpful than solitude in educating the spirit in the lessons of self-control and self-restraint, of self-denial and self-forgetting, which are indispensable to the realisation of the self.

Repentance and humility are the supreme virtues of a disciple or of a seeker after the kingdom of Heaven, according to the religion of love as represented in the east by Vaishnavism and in the west by Christianity. Repentance must precede rebirth, for it means breaking away entirely from the past, disowning the evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds, which one may have thought, said or done in the past. The Power that maketh for righteousness also counts the secret tears in the eyes and the secret sighs heaving in the breast of the soul that repents, and dispenses divine blessings and heavenly strength in proportion to the sincerity of one's penitence. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God",—said the Prince

of Prophets. But the purity of heart seldom comes without repentance and remorse for one's past indifference or wicked habits. A contrite heart, bending low with the pang of compunction, is a fit receptacle for the seeds of goodness and love to germinate and grow. One must make a clean sweep of all the dirt and impurities in the breast by means of the breeze of holy thoughts, and the stream of devout life. As the Rishis of the Upanishads said, "No one who has not turned away from the wicked habits, who is not tranquil and not composed, or whose mind has not been calmed, can attain the Self only by means of much learning." "This Self is not to be attained by disputations, nor by intellect nor by a repeated study of the Vedas, but the wise see Him in their own selves when their being is purified by the help of wisdom."

Humility is both a pre-condition and a product of wisdom. You must learn to be humble and pitch your behaviour low, and seek wisdom at the feet of your elders ; you must approach a worthy teacher or preceptor in all humility and reverence before you can attain true self-knowledge ; and at the same

time the more wisdom you acquire, the more lowly will be your spirit ; because the more conscious you will become of your stupendous ignorance in the presence of the Infinite Truth. As the Sanskrit maxim goes, "*Vidyá dadāti Vinayam*",—wisdom yields humility as its fruit. The seeker after truth will find in every visible object the vehicle of an invisible Idea and try to bring out the inner meaning and significance of things, small and great. In the falling of an apple no less than in the rustling of the wind and the fluttering of the wings of a bird, in the growth of hair no less than in the decay of the leaves of trees, the lowly spirit of the wise disciple will discover a hidden law or see an abstract theory made manifest in its concrete details. Every phenomenon in nature is thus a particular instance of a general law, a faint picture of a vivid reality. Every event in human society is the incarnation of a universal truth, the symbol of an eternal reality. It is to the lowly that this living language of nature and society begins to decipher its mysterious hieroglyphics, and to interpret its symbols and formulae. It is

by the magic wand of reverential awe and child-like simplicity, innocence and humility, that the gates of the secret chamber of Nature's store-house or treasury of truths can be opened, and the hidden beauty of things and joys of life can be realised.

Prayer is another great factor in the education of the spirit. Importance of prayer in the advancement of spiritual life cannot be too highly emphasised. We all believe in the laws of nature, and are impressed by the miracles that the great scientific geniuses are working through the discoveries of sciences and inventions of machines as a result of their observance and application of natural laws. But it hardly strikes us that the laws of mind as revealed through the achievements of the simple disposition and habit of Prayer in the lives of great saints are not less remarkable for their internal and external effects of a far-reaching character and for the comprehensive range of their application. For, after all, the sovereignty of Buddha and Moses, of Jesus and Mahomet, of Guru Nānak and Lord Gaurāṅga over vast masses of population on the surface of the

earth for long centuries is based on the inner laws of the spirit, which the great Prophets and Saints of history have utilised in the past and all right-thinking and right-doing souls are still employing towards the noble end of realising the kingdom of heaven on earth. It is true, we do not as yet understand the laws of prayer and cannot study them with mathematical exactness nor express them in scientific terminology. But we can still speak of the utility and necessity of prayer in symbolical terms and prove its reality by means of analogy. I am sitting in a room which is electrically fitted with light and fans. If I turn the switch on, I can get a bulb lighted or set a fan going. But I do not know anything about the chemical and physical processes by which the electric current is generated at the power-station, nor about the mechanism by which the wiring has been effected in my room and the current is made to flow into the light-and the fan-points. And yet ignorant as I am of all scientific knowledge and innocent as I am of all mechanical devices, I pay my dues, follow the instructions of the Electric Supply Company,

and enjoy all the luxuries and comforts of the electric lights and fans, which modern civilisation has placed at our disposal. So with prayer, which is a law of the human mind and soul, and has a subjective as well as an objective manifestation. I may not know the exact method of its working, but I pray and feel refreshed and elevated and purified, and I find similar and even more miraculous effects to be produced by prayer in the lives of others, as recorded in the religious history of all nations and as witnessed by perfectly reliable authorities in the contemporary society. That is enough to prove my case. Or let us take another example :

The child cries for food when it is hungry. It never troubles itself with the questions, what is the use of my crying ? who will listen to my cry ? how will cry satisfy my hunger ?, and so on. It cries even before it has any power of thinking, before it has any idea of the body and of its requirements. It cries instinctively and spontaneously, when it feels the pinch of hunger, not caring for the philosophical, psychological or physiological explanations of hunger and

the secretion of glands known as tears. So with prayer. It is the hunger and the thirst of the soul for its spiritual food and drink. It is a spontaneous opening of the lips of the children of the spiritual kingdom for sucking the milk of immortality from the breast of 'the Divine Mother.' It is an instinctive leaping of the heart with joy at the very sight, nay at the very thought or remembrance of the Mother's face. There is no why and wherefore, no argument and reasoning necessary for teaching a healthy, normal, robust son or daughter of God as to the utility and necessity of prayer.

There are injunctions and commandments which society imposes upon grown-up children, which these young folks are constantly obeying without questioning their authority. "Obey your parents, love your brothers and sisters", and many such maxims are observed almost instinctively by all children, and very few even among the adult minds can give reasons for doing so. If the questions were asked, 'why should I obey the parents?' and 'why should I love my brothers and sisters?'—the moral philosopher and sociologist might

give a learned discourse on the subject, but the ordinary people would either remain silent or give a wrong answer in terms of self-interest or rewards and punishments, praise and blame, which is worse than no reply at all. "Praying to God" is a duty which the family, the society and the Church might similarly enjoin on every man and woman without giving any explanations or quoting any authority.

But even the natural appetite of hunger calling forth the cry of the child as an instinctive activity has a cause and requires an explanation, and its utility and necessity are capable of scientific analysis, proof and verification by the science of physiology. Similarly the duties of obedience and love can be philosophically studied, understood and justified in the bar of reason with the help of Ethics and Metaphysics. Prayer both as a natural, spontaneous and instinctive outpouring of the human soul and as a social imperative enforced by the Church or by the Preceptors need not be an exception to this mode of investigation and may with profit be brought within the domain of science

without being robbed of its sanctity and mysterious character.

Hunger and cry have their laws. They are signs of health in the child's bodily constitution. It is through the process of hunger and cry, food and satisfaction, repeating themselves regularly at definite intervals that our body fulfils its proper function, repairs the constant wear and tear of its tissues, nourishes itself and develops to its full stature. So with the spiritual life. There is a law of prayer and a law of the response thereto in the healthy normal condition of every soul. The wonderful mechanism of the human body does not cease to be mysterious or to reveal the glory of God who is its maker, when we study its anatomy and physiology and when we apply to it the results of our investigations in physics, chemistry and biology. Nor does prayer cease to be divine or lose its mystic significance, when we discover its origin in the constitution of the human mind or place it on a level with other kindred psychological facts and phenomena. For science is a revelation of the working of God according to laws, and reason is but the

handmaid of faith for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Prayer like hunger is a feeling of want, but prayer differs from hunger in that it also supplies the satisfaction of the want. When you feel hungry you get a signal from your constitution that the materials requisite for your bodily health and strength have been used up and you are required to take in a fresh supply of foodstuffs. In a diseased constitution there is no appetite even when there is plenty to eat, and even in the normal state of health we have no hunger when the stomach is full, when the body has obtained what it requires for its up-keep for the time being. Similarly prayer represents the craving of the spiritual life for its own nourishments and its absence signifies either disease or satiety in the inner constitution. The soul needs prayer as much as the body requires the feeling of hunger, but whereas the hunger of the body can be satisfied only when proper foodstuffs are procured and meals are cooked and duly served, the presence in the soul of the impulse to pray is itself a blessing and a source of

*of comfort and joy, even when the object of prayer is as remote from realisation as ever. For prayer is both the hunger and the food to the soul, and more often than not, it carries with it its own answer and fulfilment.

What is the utility of prayer and where lies its necessity? Let us consider why and how the soul is impelled to pray. (1) There are evils in the world which make life miserable. Every man has his trials and temptations, has to struggle against lower passions and impulses, and experiences fears and anxieties, doubts and difficulties in this struggle. Man sins and repents, suffers from defeat and humiliation, loves and gets disappointed. Heaps of insults and injuries are thrown on many an unfortunate shoulder. The world is a battlefield with its hazards and hardships. Its claims and counter-claims are too much for man who seems to be but an insignificant detail in the intricate complexities of a large machine. So in his distress and despair man seeks the help and support of a father, brother or friend, derives comfort and gathers strength from the presence of his neighbours

or the company of his acquaintances. Prayer is just this seeking of consolation and strength in the communion of the soul with the divine Father and Mother and Friend. When all earthly relatives and human companions fail, man finds peace and bliss in prayer which raises him above the worries and miseries of the worldly life and carries him to the feet of the divine Father, who alone can cheer him up in the midst of the most depressing situation, and offer him the hands of forgiveness and mercy in spite of the darkest sins. The lap of the divine Mother is the refuge and shelter against all the grievous wrongs and cruel tyrannies of the world. In prayer we hear the sweet words and feel the cooling embrace of the divine Friend who repairs the wear and tear of our bruised souls, fills our hearts with hope and faith, and restores to us the health and strength, the joy and peace of mind that we lose in hard struggles of life.

(2) Nor is it merely in the hours of distress or in the dark days of adversity that the soul is impelled to pray. The need for prayer is felt as intensely and as earnestly

under the bright sunshine of prosperity. For, it requires as much care and attention and watchfulness to conserve wealth as to create it, and the discerning mind would seek the help of the divine Father in the task of maintaining the position once secured no less than in acquiring it. Calamities befall a family or an individual even in the midst of plenty and prosperity when one is least prepared for them. Who can deny the necessity of sitting at the feet of the divine Mother in humility and reverence and gratitude for the continued enjoyment of all the blessings of life as well as for guidance and strength while sailing in troubled waters ?

(3) Character is the supreme end of life and education, and it is valued by man above everything else. Formation of character depends on good habits and good company. Prayer is the best mode of cultivating good habits and keeping good company. It directs all the thoughts, words and actions of a man along their proper channels and brings them to a unity, in so far as the fulfilment of the will of the Father becomes the

dominant principle of life and all motives and impulses are purified by being put to the test of harmony with the dictates of reason and conscience, which are the inner whispers of God within. From the habit of prayer will emanate all the qualities of head and heart and all such habits as conduce to the success of life and bring peace and joy to the soul ; for, prayer leads us to the very fountain of goodness and purity and demands as its indispensable condition the total surrender of the life of the soul to its divine Master. In the attitude of prayer, man seeks and enjoys the company of the Holy One, who combines in Himself the wisdom and purity and love of all the saints and angels of this world, and that in an infinite degree. If the worst sinners were elevated and transformed by the holy touch of a Buddha or a Jesus, by the noble companionship of a Mohammad or a Nanak, how infinitely more wonderful will be the effect on the life of man produced by the sweet words, the sacred touch and the loving embrace of the divine Father in moments of prayer ! If the study of books

is a means of bringing one in contact with those great thinkers and heroes of the world whose company will purify our souls, does not prayer open before us the great Mind of the infinite God, who unfolds for our guidance and for our perfection the immortal pages of the Book of Nature and the Book of Truth, which are open to all and always accessible, but which only those can read and understand whom the Lord in His mercy chooses to inspire with the divine light? The impulse to pray is thus the beginning of that discipline and culture of the soul which culminates in the attainment of wisdom and perfection of character.

(4) In our life, we meet with problems and situations that demand a satisfactory solution. Our conscience raises questions that cannot be answered on the basis of the experiences of our own life or those of the race. Our reason fails to supply an adequate key to the riddles of the universe and the mysteries of human existence. Our desires are many and our impulses varying and strong. Now we are carried away by violent and fleeting passions and sentiments, and the next moment

we are made still and motionless by the thought of the vanity and transitoriness of everything mundane. We have a longing for the Infinite, and that is why the more we know, the more stupendous becomes our ignorance ; and the more we get, the more we have yet to seek. Even the shoeblack has a soul that refuses to be satisfied with the possession of half the world and presses his claim to the acquisition of the other half,—a soul that cannot be filled by all the finance ministers, upholsterers and confectioners of the world put together in a joint stock company, as Carlyle says. Where can we find a preceptor or a guide, who will remove all our doubts and perplexities in the fields of knowledge and action, who will set at rest all our curiosity and inquisitiveness by opening the eye of faith which enables us to see the invisible, who will give us counsels of wisdom, and direct us along the path of holiness in the midst of all besetting snares and complexities of our life and its surroundings ? It is prayer and prayer alone that can bring us face to face with the Lord, who is at once the author of nature and of

the spirit that knows it, the source and the goal of all existence, who is himself setting before men the problems of life and conduct, and also offering their solutions to those who will but ask for them in all earnestness and sincerity. In prayer, we try to hear the voice of the Ruler within, who controls the destinies of individuals and nations as wisely and as surely as He regulates the courses of the planets above and of the winds and rivers below. In prayer we are raised to that height of spiritual life where we recognise that the whole human race—with all the diversities of creed and colour, of dress and diet, of language and manners—is but one family, and that this wide universe of ours—with all its countless forces of nature and varieties of plants and animals that sometimes seem to threaten us with destruction—is but one home, over which presides our all-wise, all-powerful and all-loving Father. In prayer, we realise that our life on earth is but a course of training and discipline in a school which prepares us for a better world to come, and that our duty lies in obedience to the will of the Father, whose commandments are our

laws and whose nature is absolute purity and wisdom, justice and goodness.

(5) Children are fond of enjoying holidays and going out on an excursion. They require rest, exercise and recreation in due proportion along with the labours at school. What is prayer but a holiday-making in the spiritual world for the children of God? It gives a vigorous exercise for the spirit, involving as it does, an energising of the entire life of the soul. It is at the same time taking rest and recreating oneself, as it were, under the cool shade of the tree of immortality, while sitting on the lap of the divine Mother whose very touch sends through the body and the soul of man a thrill of joy, whose smiling countenance fills his heart with courage and whose inspiring words give him the calmness and patience that he needs in the battle of life. In his ordinary dealings with the world man finds himself under bondage; he is hemmed in from all sides by rules and regulations, laws and customs, by the routines of office works and by duties of all kinds. He is subject to the laws of the physical world

and a slave to the impulses and passions of mental life. He is limited by his own nature, by his family, by his society, by his nation, by his church, by his age. But in the attitude of prayer he rises above all these limitations and breathes the purer and healthier air of freedom in the spiritual world. His outlook is widened, his self is expanded, and he identifies himself with the world and its author's plan and purpose and thereby finds himself at home in nature and in society, feels a brotherly love towards all sentient creatures and knows the meaning of all the laws of nature and the injunctions of society. Then he tastes of the blessing of a liberated spirit whose freedom, consisting in obedience to the will of God, is not opposed to the customs and regulations that have their root in the divine voices of reason and conscience in man. Then he realises in his heart his own childhood in the spiritual household of God, and with a child's simplicity he enjoys the gifts of life and the beauties of nature. As in holiday excursions a man gives himself up to the pleasures of sights and sounds which

abound in nature, and to the joys of love and friendship and service which abound in human relationship, so in the moments of prayer the soul drinks to its heart's content the nectar of blissful immortality from the very fountain of life, and attains an ineffable joy which gives him a new insight into the meaning of existence and the beauty of things. He sees nothing but sweetness all around, sweetness in the sun and the moon and the stars, sweetness in the sky and in the clouds, sweetness in trees and plants and fruits and flowers, sweetness in mountains and oceans, in rivers and lakes, sweetness in the birds and beasts of the world, sweetness in the graceful movements of the limbs and organs of man, sweetness in the duties and obligations of the family and society, sweetness in the perceptions and reasonings, in the desires and volitions, in the emotions and sentiments of the mind. His life becomes all sweetness, and as he rises above the bondage of flesh and the conflict of duties, his heart sings in ecstasies of a delight that reverses the order of poetry as it

transforms the outlook on life and declares thus :—

I slept and dreamt that life was *duty*,
I woke and found that life was *beauty*.

Life as beauty and life as duty do not differ from each other as dreaming consciousness and waking consciousness or as illusion and reality. That would be taking a far too degraded view of beauty and far too exalted view of duty. As a matter of fact, the higher we rise in the scale of spiritual life, the pleasanter become the duties which we have to perform because of the beauty and grandeur of the life of duty itself. On the other hand in the lower and earlier stages of our moral discipline, our duty seems to be always in conflict with inclinations, and so we miss the real beauty of things and are led astray by the apparently glittering and dazzling splendour of our sense-bound and passion-coloured objects, or in other words, we take a piece of glass for diamond. Let your life soar as high as its heavenly destination allows it, and the galling sense of opposition between desire and duty will gradually give place to a pleasurable feeling of harmony between the flesh and the

spirit, which will naturally enable you to realise the beauty of life. Thus you will see beauty every-where—in nature, in human history, and in all the events and relations of your individual life.

✓ But this beauty of life can be enjoyed only if we are prepared to pay the due price for it. We need to be educated in the art of enjoying life, just as it is necessary for us to go through a training for any vocation in life. Let us therefore reflect on how we can best enjoy life and yet attain our spiritual goal.

There was a rich landholder in a certain city, so runs a Japanese story, who once sent his servant to market with five Rupees, and instructed him to purchase provisions and other necessities for the household. As a great fair or exhibition was being held near the market, the servant made the best use of the opportunity by spending every coin he had with him on amusements and refreshments. What with picture-palaces and musical concerts, what with sweet dishes and delicious fruits and fragrant flowers and perfumeries, the purse of the poor servant was emptied in no time. When

he returned to his master's house without a single article he was asked to buy and with no money left to be returned, the feelings of the master can better be imagined than described. O the fate of the wretched creature—the shame and the misery, the humiliation of being scolded and dismissed and what not! How shall we judge of the action and the character of this servant? He is an idiot, unfaithful, dishonest, given to sensual indulgence, blinded by pleasures, devoid of reason, — a thousand and one adjectives out of the dictionary of the wicked and the fools will be applied to him. And yet the servant of this type is by no means rare or infrequent in this vast household of God on earth. Every conscious rational being is a servant of God, sent to do His will, endowed with the divine gifts of sense and reason, feeling and desire. Our life is a trust, a sacred covenant, which binds us to the feet of God for the performance of certain duties. Consider the value of our life, the prices of our body and its limbs, and of its organs of sense, as well as the price of our mind and of the soul. Reduce these precious

objects to marketable commodities and express their values in terms of pounds, shillings and pence. And what will you find? No earthly sovereign with all his treasures can give us one spark of life. No engineer with all his technical skill and scientific knowledge can replace one bone, not to speak of one limb or organ of our body. You would be prepared to spend two lacs of Rupees, were you rich enough, to restore the eye-sight that you may have lost through an accident. Such is the worth of the physical body that you have inherited without any output of labour or payment of price on your part. Add to this the value of your mind and its powers, the soul and its potencies, and you will have an idea of the enormous capital that is placed at your disposal by the Divine Master, who has sent you here on earth to work as His agent. Are you making the best use of your heavenly gifts and earthly resources? Are you employing your native talents in the service of the Lord? Or are you simply playing the fool and the idiot like the poor servant in the story just related? Is your life a quick succession of transient

pleasures, and a mere string of enjoyments that seem to gratify your senses for the moment, but really rob you of your vitality, mental energy and spiritual substance? Beware, the eye of the Master is ever watching you. He is an all-seeing, all-knowing, ever-wakeful, and exacting task-master, who sees our secret thoughts and deeds, who penetrates into the innermost recesses of our hearts and judges the deepest root-springs of our actions, and who is constantly punishing the wrong-doers in the public and rewarding the righteous in secret. He demands absolute obedience and faithful devotion from His servants in this vine-yard, and every act of negligence and indolence, every thought of self-indulgence and transgression is being visited by the eternal and immutable laws of Divine Justice with an unerring and even-handed decree which follows of inevitable and unalterable necessity. Rightly used, our body and mind would be the receptacle of supernatural energy, our power would be commensurate with the omnipotence of God Himself, transforming the earth into a new

Heaven and human beings into Divine spirits. But given to enjoyments and pleasures, to self-indulgence and transgression, the same body and mind are made a workshop of the Devil, or a veritable hell, and the man who was destined to be an angel, a worthy son of God, is turned into a slave of his lower nature, or a beast of burden, made to work like dumb driven cattle in human form. What is the consequence of such wilful negligence and gross violation of duty in God's House-hold ? Nothing short of *dismissal* or *rejection* of the servant after repeated warnings. It may seem strange but it is as true as the night follows the day, that the wrong-doers, the rebels against God's laws, are punished with dismissal or rejection. They are cast out like fallen leaves and swept out of the vine-yard like refuse materials to be thrown into the debris. There is an examination going on in Nature : those who come up to a certain standard and fulfil the minimum conditions of the test are passed ; those who do very well are selected for higher places and the best-qualified rise to the top. The fittest are selected and survive in the struggle for

existence, as the Biologists or Evolutionists would say. The lazy and the indulgent, the self-centred and unfaithful are considered unfit and rejected from the arena of life ; they are miserable failures and their parts are played out, they must go to the wall and die. For, the wages of sin is death, as the Bible says. Of such miserable lot, of their foolish self-forgetting and consequent humiliation and suffering, the story of the servant in this sermon of a Japanese minister is an apt illustration. Let every honest youngman and every earnest soul take the lesson of this story to heart and keep in mind the duties we owe to our ever-watchful and never-sleeping Task-master as His humble servants.

How can we best serve God our Lord ? It is not necessarily by having a Puritan contempt for pleasure, nor by turning away from all the healthy and innocent enjoyments of life, that the best of men have rendered services to their Master, who is in Heaven. The old idea of dualism between the sensible and the super-sensible or spiritual, between the flesh and the soul, between the life in the world and the religious life must be

discarded in favour of a truer and higher view of things. The senses are not alien to the spirit, they are not snares to be avoided and suppressed or rooted out. On the contrary, a reasonable exercise of our senses and a moderate and well-restrained enjoyment of pleasures of the senses are indispensable to the preservation of our health, and to the growth of our physical and mental life. Thus the spring and the sunshine, the fullmoon-lit night and the cool summer breeze, the melodies of birds, the fragrance of flowers, delicious fruits in our gardens, the beauty of nature and grace of human form, the tender embrace of our beloved ones, and the sweet kisses of our children,—all these objects of our senses do bring gladness to our hearts and help in unfolding our spiritual potentialities by touching the secret chords of our inner life.

There is a rhythmic movement in nature as displayed in the ebb and flow of the oceans, in the rotatory and revolving movements of the planets along their proper orbits, in the diurnal cycles of the morning

and the evening, in the monthly return of the fullmoon after the darkest night, the running of the weeks and months in due recurrence, and in the regular succession of seasons,—the rains and the autumn following the summer, and the spring following the winter in merry procession. A similar cycle of rhythmic movements may be noticed in the life of the soul. The spirit has also its seasons, sometimes corresponding to, but often not parallel to the changes in the seasons of nature. For, the spirit is above nature ; mind is, as the poet says, its own seat and can makè a heaven of hell and hell of heaven. We should keep our heart always in tune with the music of the stars and in harmony with nature's rhythmic dance. This is the secret of enjoyment in life. Let us make merry by all means,—but within right limits and in the right place, and at the right time. We require no holidays for merry-making, for the spirit can make a festival of every day. Nature's laws are inexorable and know of no break or gap, and yet there is no end of feasts and festive rejoicings in the eternal spring season of the infinite rest-house of the

spirit. As in Nature, so in the sphere of morality. No laws of the physical universe can be suspended for a moment without upsetting the equilibrium of the whole structure and destroying every atom and particle of matter. Nor can there be a holiday in the kingdom of duty without the violation of all the ethical laws and without a rebellion against the majesty of the moral order. You cannot have six days' strenuous moral exertions followed by one day's laxity and indulgence in the kingdom of Heaven. You cannot make of your truth-speaking during 364 days a valid pretext for telling a lie on the 365th day of the year. No, the Moral Law is stern and solemn, and Duty is an exacting and jealous task-mistress, and their sovereign rights cannot be infringed with impunity. But this does not mean that there is no room for enjoyment or merry-making in the sphere of our moral life. As the poet has said,

“What blessings Thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away ;
For God is paid when man receives,
To enjoy is to obey.”

It is therefore morally imperative on us to be

cheerful and to make others cheerful. Let us enjoy a holiday in recreation, in loving each other, in singing and dancing and rejoicing all the more, because we are under the Law. For even to enjoy is a moral duty, and to receive gratefully whatever blessings of love and joy come to our lot from on high is to make a humble return to the Giver of all good.

Here let me make a few remarks on what I consider to be one of the most essential and therefore indispensable conditions of enjoyment. As every duty involves a right and *vice versa*, does it not follow as a necessary corollary from our obligations to enjoy that we should have a corresponding right to be cheerful, to make merry and to entertain others with amusements and recreations of all sorts? Reflect on this inalienable right of man to be happy and to enjoy life. It is one of those birth-rights of ours which we must never let willingly be snatched away from us by any laws and regulations of the society or of the state. But what if we deprive ourselves of this right by our own selfish and foolish deeds of

excessive indulgence ? What if we are robbed of our energy and vitality, of our health and peace by the vicious impulses and wicked habits which have taken root in our mental life and gradually made us a slave in our own house ? We have then to keep intact our self-government or home-rule in the inner Republic, by not only preserving at all costs our natural right to live happily and to enjoy innocent pleasures, but also by exercising those powers of self-control and self-restraint which alone can enable us to acquire in a greater degree, in a fuller measure and for a longer period, the material and spiritual ingredients which constitute happiness and lead to enjoyment. First we must acquire the capacity of the body and the mind as well as the health and vigour of the senses to be able to enjoy. This can be done only when we follow nature, conform to nature's laws, and obey our rational nature. Vice is unnatural ; all sensual excesses and indulgences are transgressions of the laws and conditions imposed by the Queen of Nature. Our civilisation is mostly responsible for many of the evils of the modern

age, in so far as it has produced conditions under which life is made mechanical, and the art of living is removed far away from the simplicity of nature. In spite of all our machines and factories, and all improvements of communications and conveyances which have added to the comforts and luxuries of life in the modern age, we miss the grace and the beauty of life in nature ; and the fountain of love and joy which were innate in the simple, unsophisticated mind of the primitive man seems to have been dried up. Hence the cry of "return to nature," "back to the golden age of the past", which is rising from the heart of the civilised world to-day. We see many a sign of reaction against the artificialities and conventionalities of modern society in the west (e. g. the Peasants' Movement). Even in India the spirit of our national festivals has been buried under lifeless customs and rites, and useless formalities and ceremonialism. We have to re-discover and re-interpret the meanings of these festivals, and restore their connection with the rhythmic dance of nature. Let our spirit return through nature to the spirit

which is a law unto itself and yet the source of all freedom and enjoyment.

Viewed rightly, not only the joyous festivals of human society, but all things in the world and all experiences of life are co-operating in making men religious. Nature is waiting at the door like a fair maiden to tempt man into the temple of the Beautiful. It is to remind man of God, to make him feel the touch of God's hand, to kindle in him the desire for a union with God, to awaken in his breast an intense longing for the love of God, that all beauties exist. For example, the beauty of Nature and the beauty of human face remind us of something forgotten, as it were, and create in us a restlessness which cannot come to an end till we feel that the ultimate reality is Beauty. The world is the revelation of this Beauty, and our life is the revelation of the same Beauty. Our discipline and culture are all means to the realisation of beauty. There are a thousand ways and forms in which Beauty is revealing itself ; a thousand eyes and ears are busy tasting of this beauty,—all in their different modes. For instance, clouds and

colours in the sky may appeal to a Poet and to a Scientist in a very different manner, but both derive joy from, and discover beauty in their experiences of these objects. But we have to rise above the senses and desires of our individual minds to the lofty heights of spiritual vision, before we can see this beauty. As Plato held, Beauty is the hand-maid of Philosophy, for she leads the soul step by step to the world of Ideas. Beauty entices us through all her forms to the paradise of Love. When man falls in love with God, the angels rejoice. The greatest thing in the world is Love, which gives us a new vision and a new life. Love may be realised even in common life, in the innocent pleasures of youth and warmth of friendship, in the married life of husband and wife, as well as in the birth of a child in the family. Love effects the wedding between souls and souls and makes life divine. It brings men nearer to God. Love teaches us to render services and make sacrifices without expecting any return ; it enables us to bear all privations and sufferings with infinite patience, and even to go beyond good and evil. With

the eye of love one can see beauty everywhere and discover joy in the heart of things. Thus the life of the spirit is full of beauty and joy, of love and sweetness. For one who realises the meaning of life and the vision of the Supreme, the acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching physical objects in our daily life are not mere sensations but spiritual experiences,—so that for him living coincides with worshipping, enjoyment is identical with prayer, and the whole life is permeated by Divine Grace. This is true religion, and this is also the culmination of spiritual culture.

VII.

RISHIS AND YOGIS OF MODERN INDIA.

There are two aspects of nature which fill the hearts of men with everlasting awe and wonder, *viz.*, the mountain and the ocean. They are recognised by Nature-worshippers as two great representatives of Divinity on earth. Both are symbols of the sublime and the powerful, and bear the stamp of infinity in their faces. One strikes the imagination by its height, the other touches the emotion by its depth, and both awaken in us by their vast and limitless expanse and range the sense of our nothingness in the presence of nature. A great poet has pictured them as two bulworks of freedom. Theirs is the voice that calls mankind to duty and liberty, to equality and fraternity. From their bosom flows the stream of life and blows the breeze of health that nourish and invigorate the human body, and purify and elevate the human soul. It is in the ranges of mountains

and in the coasts of oceans that we must look for the training of the *Rishis* and *Yogis*, of the sages and saints. Two types of heroes or great men are produced in these two different regions. The mountain is the type of the Heavenly—lofty and sublime, high above the cares and anxieties of human habitations, and detached from the agitations of the plains. Those who dwell on the heights of the Himalayas must be capable of a higher and a broader vision,—the vision of the self and of God. The *Rishis* of the mountain type thus represent the seers, the philosophers, the meditators. The ocean is the type of Humanity—deep and lowly, kissing the earth and its plains, in intimate touch with the stream of life, with its meandering courses, and its ebbs and tides. The dwellers on the coasts of oceans are experts in the art of navigation and in the science of astronomy, which lead to the study of nature in her vastness of resources and to the study of man with his trade and commerce, and his social and political activities. The *Yogis* of the oceanic type represent the scientists, the soldiers, the statesmen and social workers.

Mother India is gifted with many a blessing from on high, of which the most sacred is the providential dispensation of mighty souls, born and brought up in her natural laps,—in the caves and recesses of the Himalayas and in the eastern and western coasts of the Indian Ocean. It is the combination of both these types of heroes and great men, the philosopher and the scientist, the seer and the worker, the idealist and the realist, that made her great in the glorious past and that will make her greater in a still more glorious future. The Prince of Prophets, Jesus Christ, who was teacher of religion and morality to the nations of the West, combined in himself the genius of the mountain type and of the oceanic type, and preached two sermons for the guidance of humanity,—the sermon on the Mount meant for the chosen few, who are to be the salt of the earth, and the sermon on the Sea of Galili meant for the multitude, for the masses of men living in society. Europe and America have been true to their Master, and fixing their eyes on the two poles of heaven and earth, they have

drawn their inspiration from the mountain and the ocean alike: Will India alone look up to heaven and neglect the earth? Will she remain for ever a worshipper of the mountain type, and seek guidance only from the visionaries, the dreamers, and the idealists, wholly neglecting her maritime resources and potentialities and her intercourse with nations and societies of mankind? The answer is supplied in the most emphatic negative by the true sons of mother India, by the great makers of her national life and movements during the modern age. The lives of Rájá Rámmohan Roy, Maharshi Devendra Náth Tágore and Brahmánanda Keshab Chandra Sen are eloquent sermons to the future trustees of our nation, preaching the ideal of harmony and reconciliation between the heaven and the earth, between the self and nature, between meditation and action.

(I) **RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY -**
A Modern Indian Seer.

The life of Raja Rammohan Roy is so vast, so comprehensive and so closely interwoven with the whole history of modern India, that one cannot expect to do justice

even to a few aspects of it within a short compass. I intend to confine my attention here to a study of the life of the great Raja from four different points of view, *viz.*—

I. Raja as a World-hero.

II. Raja as the Father of New India.

III. Raja as the Founder of the Brahmo Samaj.

IV. Raja as a Man.

I. Raja Rammohan Roy was born at a critical time of the human history. It was the age of the French Enlightenment and the Encyclopaedists, the age of the growth of natural sciences and of materialistic philosophy, the age of social and political revolutions and religious decadence. Man's free thinking was running riot in every department ; all the sacred laws and institutions that govern the impulses and habits of the masses were being questioned and reconstructed in the light of reason. Western civilisation was passing through a crisis. Rationalists were riding roughshod over the long-cherished sentiments of mankind. The very existence of religion was at stake. 'Science *versus* religion' was the cry of the day. The age demanded heroes and prophets

who could bring into reconciliation the material and spiritual interests of man, who could help in the final re-adjustment of the claims of science and religion. The Raja was an Indian representative of the Spirit of that age, and was one of those few thinkers who saved the situation by declaring the supremacy of religious consciousness and yet did not ignore the value of sciences and the necessity of material improvements. He was in a way the best product of that period in so far as he was a staunch advocate of rationality, universality, liberty and humanity and his life was an embodiment of these principles of enlightenment. His towering genius not only conceived the idea of "one God, one Religion and one Humanity", but tried to realise that idea in his own life and in the life of the society in which he lived. He ransacked all the scriptures of the world, studied them in their original languages, discovered with a singular insight the similarity in their fundamental and essential principles, and tried to propagate this doctrine of unity with such vigour and earnestness that even during

his lifetime he began to attract the notice and command the reverence of the greatest minds of England, and what is more striking, the followers of all the principal religious creeds prevalent in India at the time, *viz.*—Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity,—claimed him as their co-religionist. His love of humanity was not merely an abstract thought but became an active principle that dominated his entire life and conduct. He keenly watched all the contemporary movements of Europe and America. Thus the agitation for constitutional government in Spain, the Neapolitan rising against the subjugation of Austria, the struggle for liberty in France, the Reform Bill of 1832 in England, the emancipation of slaves in America, were of as much concern to him as any private engagement at home or any public duty to his mother country. Nothing that would permanently affect the history of the world escaped his notice. His heart was as wide as humanity—he was a cosmopolitan. He took his legitimate share in the world-movement of political, social and religious reforms, and and played his part in the

world-drama with a dignity and broad-mindedness, of which every Indian may well be proud. He was a world-hero, and hence it is that the name of the Raja is honoured to-day in all parts of the world and his death anniversary is celebrated in all the corners of the globe. India has ever been blessed with prophets and saviours, with a Buddha and a Sankar, with a Nanak and a Chaitanya, but no other individual can claim to have taken a more comprehensive interest in the world's affairs, or had a more extended vision of a united India and a united humanity than Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

II. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is justly looked upon as the father of modern India, and a distinguished historian has rightly called this epoch of Indian history after the illustrious Raja. India was passing through critical times when the Raja lived and worked. It was the age of the advent of English settlers, of the transition from the Moghal rule to the British rule ; the East had for the first time come into contact with the West ; Christian missionaries were coming out in large numbers and seeking converts

in the land of the Rishis ; European merchants were flooding the Indian market with all those goods which create desires for comforts and luxuries and fan the flame of worldliness. A guiding hand was necessary—an expert helmsman—to steer the vessel of our national life safely across the ocean of turmoil and unrest, and to save the country from the evils of drinking, beef-eating and blind imitation of all the manners and fashions of the white races. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the divinely appointed man in that spot who rose equal to the situation. He was the creator of the new age. He was the first Indian to introduce and support English education, to inaugurate political and social reforms, to found institutions for moral and religious advancement of his fellow-countrymen, to promote vernacular literature and journalism, and to formulate the ideal of the Indian civilisation for ages to come. He was not merely the first educationist, the first social and political reformer, the first religious teacher, the first author, the first linguist and the first student of the science of Comparative Religion, but he also stands

first in the vast sphere of influence which he wielded as well as in the far-reaching consequences which have been produced by his activities in this country both during his lifetime and after his death. We are reaping the fruits of his labour, inheriting the treasures which he accumulated for us. His blood is running in our veins, we are breathing in the atmosphere created by him. He is verily our spiritual father and the maker of modern India.

III. The prophetic vision of the Raja as regards the unity of God and the unity of Religion is nowhere more clearly manifested than in that memorable document—the Trust-deed of the Brahmo Samaj,—which is really an ever-lasting monument of his spiritual genius. The Raja's Ideals of universality, rationality, liberty, humanity and totality (or all-sidedness and perfection), received a visible shape so to speak in the Brahmo Samaj. It is the living embodiment of the spirit of the Raja as a world-hero and as the prophet of New India. His soul became incarnate in the body of the Samaj, and pervaded it as the principle of unity that binds together and harmonises intellect, feeling and will, *jñān*,

bhakti, and *karma*, the individual and family and society, the world and religious life, science and faith. It unites the Hindus and Mahomedans, Jews and Christians, Buddhists and Sikhs in one brotherhood. The germ that was sown by the Raja in that small congregation of Theists has grown to be a large tree that strikes its root deeper and deeper into our national scriptures of the remotest antiquity, and spreads its branches wider and wider till it participates in the light and air of all the spiritual dispensations of the world as well as of the most up-to-date philosophical speculations. A tree is known by its fruit. I can only enumerate here a few of the most wholesome influences emanating from the great movement inaugurated by the Raja :—

(i) It has introduced in our country a mode of congregational worship, based on the Upanishads, and (ii) and thus promoted the cultivation in us of the sense of communal responsibility and social solidarity, and (iii) turned our mind towards the priceless treasures of our sacred literature which have been left as a legacy by our

Rishis of old, but which were so long neglected and remained a sealed book for us.

(iv) It has brought about an intimate relationship between religion and morality, so that the former is not merely confined to the performance of certain rites and ceremonies with an eye towards Heaven and Hell, but embraces the whole sphere of man's duty to himself and to his fellow-individuals, and also demands a complete transformation in the habits and manners of the religious man.

(v) It leads to all kinds of social reforms and battles against injustice and superstitions, be it caste system, or burning of widows, early marriage or dowry system.

(vi). It advocates the education and emancipation of women, their equal rights and liberties with the stronger sex, and secures a juster mode of family organisation, in which more enlightened care is taken of infants, in which a child's life is respected and motherhood dignified, and in which the growth of manhood and womanhood is scientifically regulated according to the teachings of psychology and pedagogy, and through the creation of healthy literature and periodicals.

(vii) It diverts the current of religious life along the channels of philanthropic activities, *c.g.*, founding widows' homes, orphanages, homes for the blind and the cripple, night-schools for workingmen, and institutes for the deaf and the mute, starting reliefworks in areas visited by flood and famine, nursing the sick and feeding the poor, elevating the depressed classes and rendering such other services to humanity.

(viii) It maintains a class of ministers and preachers, who not only strive to realise the supreme ideal in their own lives, but are ever ready to help others in knowing the truth and following the light. Thus instead of selfishly enjoying the blessings of truth in their private chest, they invite all men and women to come and participate in the sweet fruits of spiritual life and even carry abroad the treasures of the Hindus to the doors of all other races.

✓ IV. Raja Rammohan Roy was above all a Man; divested of all adjectives expressing limitations and distinctions and narrowness of interests. He was not a Hindu or a Bráhmaṇ, not an Indian or a Bengali, not a scholar or a linguist, not a politician or a

philanthropist, but a *Man*, who was all these no doubt but something above and beyond these too. He embraced the whole of humanity in the range of his sympathy, in the comprehensiveness of his interest and in the breadth of his outlook. What a mighty heart is lying still there,—beneath the tomb of Bristol! His birth in India and death in England seem to me to signify the important truth that the East and the West have already met in the life and personality of the Raja. He is the symbol of ever-lasting union between India and England. He is like a solitary star that dwells apart—as bright, as glorious, as remote as a star. India has need of such stars to serve as beacon-lights for her youngmen and to guide her destiny across the boundless ocean of time, and that especially during these dark hours of the night, when the sky is so cloudy and the wind is so frightfully boisterous.

His life may be pictured as a mountain,—it was as firm, as immovable, as lofty and as sublime. He raised his head high above the clouds and the dust of the valleys, and was crowned with the eternal sunshine of divine wisdom, while his breast was subjected

to the storms and showers of rain which trouble every mortal body. Or we may compare the Raja with an ocean—as deep, as calm, as mysterious as the ocean was the soul of the Raja in perpetual communion with the Supreme Spirit ; and yet the external life and activities of the man resemble the beating of the wind and the surging of the waves that agitate the surface of the ocean.

Such was Raja Rammohan Roy—the world-hero, the Father of modern India, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, the immortal Man. He still liveth in his works. He still speaketh through his writings. Youngmen of India ! Would you be adventurous and enterprising ? Then study the life of the Raja. Would you be scholars and journalists, or social and political reformers ? Then take up the works of the Raja. Would you be seekers after spiritual life and true sons of God ? Then follow the footsteps of the Raja. He has chalked out the path of your progress once for all, he has formulated the Ideal which can satisfy all the longings and aspirations of your soul. In accepting him as your guide lies your country's salvation.

(II) MAHARSHI DEVENDRANATH TAGORE—

A Modern Indian Saint.

A young soul was sitting by the side of the death-bed of his grand-mother—his father's mother. The young soul has passed eighteen springs and eighteen summers in this world in one of the most opulent and respectable families of Bengal. The son of Prince Dwarakanath, who used to invite the then Governor General of India to tea at his house and enjoy friendly talks and games indoors with him, who was the guest of Queen Victoria of immortal fame during his visit to England,—the boy had been brought up in the midst of all the luxuries and refined manners, which wealth and culture could make possible. Such were the young soul's antecedents when he was sitting beside his departing grandmother—his dear, dear grandmother, who had sown the seed of spiritual life in the boy during her life and who was destined to initiate him into the deeper mysteries of spiritual life through her death. The old revered lady was carried to the *ghat* of the Ganges at her request, so that she might breathe her last with her eyes

fixed on, and her body touching, the sacred waters of the heavenly river. The hymns and *kirtans* befitting the dying mementos were being sung day and night, the holy names of the Lord, "Hari" "Om" etc. were being whispered into her ears, till the spirit immortal left the frail earthen cage and proceeded on her ever-delightful flight into the region of eternal freedom and peace. There was a stillness in the air, the moon was shining bright overhead, the waters of the Ganges were sparkling and glittering in joy at the sight of this meeting between heaven and earth. The boy of eighteen was absorbed in his thought concerning the vanity of human life before him and the beauty of nature around him. We can easily imagine the train of thought that rushed across his mental horizon. The sublime mystery of life ! how profound, how real, and yet how empty, how dreamy ! What is this life—which to-day is, and to-morrow is not, which is so full of love and affection, such a living centre of hopes and desires, of services and influences to-day, and yet so cold and motionless, so indifferent and callous,—only a lump of flesh to-morrow ! This body,

whose august presence struck terror in the hearts of so many negligent subordinates and filled every heart with reverential awe and devotion, is now placed beneath piles of woods and burnt to ashes ! Nothing remains but dust, dust and dust ! O the vainty of life, its constant vicissitudes, its transient pleasures, its unreality and nothingness ! A heavy cloud of sorrow was hanging over the young soul and the gloom of his mind spread darkness over the moon-lit sky and the burning fire of the pyre.

But lo ! The light of heaven suddenly flashes across his mind,—a flash of light only momentary in duration but eternal in significance. Hark ! the charming music of the soul, but dimly heard by his mind's ears, keeps the boy spell-bound. The soul—the immortal soul—is there ! “Dust thou art, to dust returnest”—was not spoken of the soul ! The spirit liveth—the eternal spirit, which transcends all limitations of space and time ! Beyond the death and decay of the bodily frame, behind the perpetual flux of successes and failures, joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, and despite the lives and

deaths of countless human beings, there abides the birthless and deathless life of the Universal Spirit,—the Supreme Being who regulates “the starry heavens above and the moral law within.” A faint consciousness of some such ideas, very vaguely felt and obscurely perceived—half-revealed and half-concealed—must have touched the surface of the young mind. A thrill of joy passed through his heart—a sensation of ineffable beauty,—a glimpse of the Infinite.—A spark of faith in the unseen kindled in him that insatiable thirst for the Supreme Reality which led him onward and upward through the pilgrimage of life till he reached the temple of the Invisible Spirit in his inner soul and in the outer world.

That vision was transient, that joy was but evanescent. The solid earth with its hard crusts of bodily necessities, the winds and waves of fleeting events and untoward circumstances, the tyrannous society with its iron chain of customs and rites and rules of etiquette, the selfish world with all its claims and counter-claims, its trials and temptations and its struggles and

defeats do not take long to obscure our inner vision and to obliterate the traces of our inward joy. But that golden moment of unique spiritual experience left a permanent impression on the youthful mind and settled the course of his life once for all. That beatific vision or rather its faint remembrance awakened in his mind a burning zeal and an eager search for the truth which alone can make man free ; it created in him a spirit of restlessness and discontent with the world, a longing for the abiding joys of the higher life of the Spirit, a craving for the sweet companionship of his Father and Friend in Heaven, who could unite him in love with all the souls of the world, living and departed. He was troubled by doubts and despairs as to the possibility of attaining that blessed union ; he felt with intense agony the pang of separation from the beloved object of his desire ; he spent days and weeks in this miserable condition, brooding over the half-forgotten spiritual vision revealed to him on the bank of the Ganges besides the burning pyre of his grandmother. He used to sit under the great banian tree in the botanical garden off Calcutta

from morning till evening, absorbed wholly and intensely in the realisation of his blissful state, so much so that even the bright dazzling rays of the mid-day sun appeared to him to be black. O, for the light of heaven !

An earnest seeker after God is never refused the beatific vision. He may wait long, long years in most dreary and bitter disappointment, but the light is sure to dawn on the horizon of his soul. "Seek and ye shall find it. Ask and it shall be given unto thee. Knock and it shall be opened unto thee." This is true in all ages and has been confirmed by the experiences of all seers and saints. So it was with Devendranath Tagore. The doors of Heaven were at last opened. The message of God, the revelation of His truth, came to him literally as a windfall. One day the torn leaf of a Sanskrit book was being carried away by the wind. Devendranath picked it up out of curiosity, but being unable to understand its text, handed it over to his family priest, who also pleaded his ignorance and asked him to consult Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyāvāgis, a minister of the Brahmo Samaj and a devoted follower of

Raja Rammohan Roy. The learned Pandit found it to be a torn page of the *Isá* Upanishad, the first verse of which runs thus :—

Isá vásyam idam sarvam

yat kincha jagatyám jagat.

Tena tyaktvā bhunjīthā

mā gridhah kasyasvid dhanam.

The meaning of the verse, as understood by Devendranath in the light of the interpretation given by the Pandit may be expressed thus :—All that is in the universe is pervaded or interpenetrated by God ; so enjoy Him or the bliss of His companionship, leaving aside all that is of the world, and of the flesh ; don't covet anyone else's property."

This verse of the torn page of an old Upanishad revealed to him the secret that he was seeking after ; it opened before him a new world—a God-vestured world ; a flood of light was thrown on every nook and corner of his experience of life and society. He exclaimed like that discoverer of a scientific law, Archimedes, "I have found it," "I have found it." That one verse contained for him not only the final answer and satisfaction for his year-long quest, but also the ultimate solution of all the

riddles of the human life and of the universe that could trouble his breast ever afterward. He has obtained the clue to his salvation, the guiding motto of his life, and the rest of his life was nothing but an exemplification of this truth, the application of this fundamental principle to all the details of his life,—to the family organisation, to the social institutions and to the religious missions with which he was connected.

Every saint has to pass through the baptism of fire. Trials and temptations come in the way to test the spiritual strength and fervour, the intensity of the faith and the reality of the self-surrender of the devotee. Devendranath also had his trials, but he stood all the tests successfully and came out triumphant as the *great seer* of modern India. His father's death in England gave him an opportunity for the practical demonstration of his faith. Since his acquaintance with Ramchandra Vidyāvāgîs, the Pandit who first initiated him into the mysteries of the Upanishads, he had come into contact with the Brahmo Samaj and identified himself with the religion of Raja Rammohan

Roy. The personality of the Raja, who was a fast friend of his father, Prince Dwarakanath, had impressed Devendranath in his early age. He remembered how once he was sent by his father to invite Raja Rammohan Roy on the occasion of the festival of *Durgá puja* and how the great Raja answered in his usual loving and smiling manner, "Brother, brother, why invite me? I am not an idol-worshipper." Now the *Sraddha* ceremony of his father has to be performed. The whole family was bent on making preparations for the rites on a grand scale according to the customs and traditions of old. But the Maharshi stood firm against idolatrous ceremonies; for, the motto of his life was to see God as interpenetrating the whole world, and not to bow before idols and images of God. That was a trial on which depended the whole course of his spiritual life. Was he prepared to follow his conscience and to fulfil the demands of God on him, in the teeth of all opposition from his family and society? The voice of God triumphed and young Devendranath dreamt that his departed ancestors were gratified at the

decision he firmly adhered to. That was the first occasion when a domestic ceremony was performed according to Brahmo rites.

✓ Another trial was even more formidable; as it strained his utmost energy and capacity for sacrifice. His father had left behind him a heavy debt of several millions of rupees in the name of Kar, Tagore & Co., the assets of which fell far short of the liabilities. Since Dwarakanath was prudent enough to leave aside for his family a handsome income from a source quite independent of the property of Tagore & Co., the creditors could not legally lay claim to any hand in this personal property. But young Devendranath remembered the last part of the first verse of the *Isá* Upanishad, "Don't covet any one else's property", and felt that it was his duty to pay off the debts of his father even at the sacrifice of his personal property. The creditors were taken by surprise and some of them were found to shed tears at the austere self-denial of the youngman, as he went to the length of taking off a valuable ring from his finger and handed it over to the Judge towards the clearing off of his father's liabilities. The

day was a read-letter day not only in the life of Devendrañath but also in the history of India. It ought to serve as an example to many of our selfish and worldly-minded countrymen who are responsible for so many banking disasters and yet do not care to lose a half-penny from their enormous wealth to relieve the miseries of thousands of poor families ruined by these sad catastrophies. Maharshi was wise enough to introduce from that very day the strictest possible economy in every sphere of his household, so much so that he used to live on scanty meals and to mend his own worn-out clothes. He began to supervise minutely the administration of his landed property, and managed all his concerns in such an efficient and intelligent way that in course of a year he cleared off all the liabilities of his father, including even the donation of one lac of rupees promised by the deceased to a charitable institution,—an amount which the Governing Body of that institution had given up for lost. Moreover within a few years he succeeded in recovering and improving his paternal property to such an extent that he was able to send two of his sons

abroad for education in England and to promote in his family the highest type of culture in literature, music and painting.

India has long suffered from excessive and one-sided development in her religious life owing to which she has always emphasised one factor of an antithesis at the expense of the other. Thus knowledge and love (*Jñān and Bhakti*), action and contemplation (*Karma and Dhyan or Yoga*), worship and work (*Bhakti and Karma*), the world and religion, science and faith, reason and revelation have always been thought to be mutually irreconcilable, with the result that the spiritual life of the Indian saints and sages and of the Indian people in general has often been perfected in one particular direction, be it *Jñān*, *Bhakti*, or *Karma*, without an attempt being made to bring all these various modes of discipline to a synthesis and to restore their natural and normal relation of a balanced harmony. The beauty of the Religion of the Brahmo Samaj consists just in this reconciliation and harmony of all the various methods of moral and spiritual disciplines, of all the different walks of life and departments of human

activities. This we find exemplified in the lives of all the great leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. Study the life of Raja Rammohan Roy or of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore or of Brahmánanda Keshab Chandra Sen, and you will find in every case a balanced union of all the elements of life,—a union of spiritual culture with the worldly welfare, of meditation and contemplation, worship and prayer, with an ideal life in the family as dutiful father and husband, and with an active life in society as a promoter of education, of moral and religious reforms, of political, economical, and industrial advancement of their countrymen. The secret of this is to be sought in their firm conviction that God is ever-present and ever-active in the world, and that religion consists in loving and serving Him in and through the love and service of humanity. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore's life is perhaps a perfect embodiment of this principle. He defines worship (or *Upásaná*) as "*Tasmin prítistasya priya-káryasádhanāñcha*"—i. e. love of God and performance of works which are acceptable to Him. He lived entirely according to this ideal of worship, and his life may be regarded as one

long continuous and unbroken worship of the great God in the temple of this universe or one uninterrupted procession of pilgrimage to the sacred city of God within his heart. While doing his duties as a successful businessman, as an able administrator of his estate, he never neglected for a day his own spiritual culture, nor his interest in the supreme welfare and all-round training of his children, nor his services in the cause of the Brahmo Samaj, to preach the message of which was the special and divinely appointed mission of his life.

If the Tagore family is to-day distinguished in Bengal and even in the world for its literary and artistic productions, if it claims to have given to Bengal its first Civilian (late Sir Satyendranath Tagore I. C. S.), to India one of its profoundest philosophers (Dwijendranath Tagore), and to the world one of its greatest poets (Dr. Rabindranath Tagore), if this family has held aloft the light of spiritual culture in music, painting and religious practice, and thereby elevated the status of India and the Indians in the commonwealth of nations of the civilised world, it is entirely due to the accumulated treasures of spiritual energy

which Maharshi Devendranath Tagore had stored up during his long years of meditation and contemplation, service and sacrifice, and to the prayerful and devout training and organisation, in the midst of which he brought up the members of his family. It is hardly known to the outside public how the grand Rishi took a keen interest in the minutest details of his children's life, corrected their Bengali compositions and Sanskrit recitations, encouraged them to contribute articles to the family journal, to practise the habit of prayer and to sing hymns composed by themselves, on important occasions ; and how on his return to Calcutta after months of recluse life in the Himalayas he used to call the children aside and ask questions of all sorts to test their general progress during his absence ; and how the boy Rabindranath, who was his youngest and most favourite child and who was found to be shy of his teachers at school, had to be subjected to a special coaching by a tutor according to a scheme prepared by the Maharshi himself,—a scheme which aimed at all-round culture, including visits to country places and beautiful landscapes on the

Himalayas, and which contributed to the awakening and development of the poetical instinct of the child along healthy spiritual lines. It is Maharshi Devendranath's piety and religious fervour that took a visible shape in the grand *Aśrama* in the wilderness of Bengal. This Shańtiniketan—which is veritably an abode of peace—will ever remain a holy shrine for India and for the world, for it is here that the great Rishi communed with the divine spirit and lived in blessed companionship with the saints and seers of the world; it is here that Rabindranath has founded his ideal national school, written his world-renowned *Gītāñjali* and preached his immortal sermons on the realisation of spiritual life.

Another great leader of a religious movement in modern India has been elevated to the rank of Maharshi, viz. Swámí Dayánanda, the illustrious founder of the Aryasamaj. It will be profitable for us to reflect for a while on the similarity of the mission and the spirit of these two great Rishis.

Doctors differ, but *Rishis* agree. To a

superficial observer, there is much that is incompatible and even conflicting between the lives and teachings of these two great Rishis of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. But inspite of important differences in some of the doctrines of the two movements, the common ground is so wide and the basis of agreement so deep that the logical evolution of thought no less than the sociological forces behind our national life will drive them to the recognition of a common ideal and to the acceptance of a joint programme of social and educational activities in the long run. In what follows I shall try to bring out the common features in the missions of Devendra Nath and Dayánanda as briefly as possible.

1. Apparently wide as the differences seem to be in their external modes of living there is a unity of spirit running through their life and works. Maharshi Devendra Nath was born and brought up in a wealthy family and was in the enjoyment of princely fortunes in the prime of his life, but he dedicated his wealth to the service of God and practised the virtue of renunciation and

welcomed a life of poverty and privation when truth and honour and duty demanded a glorious sacrifice. Though a householder and a father of gifted children, his *vairāgya*, or detachment from the family cares and anxieties and his longing for spiritual communion with God made him as perfect a *sannyāśi* or *yogi* as Swāmī Dayānanda. Both were great scholars and men of learning and yet given to meditation and prayer. Both were devoted disciples of the Vedic Rishis and drew their inspiration from the teachings of the Upanishads. Both sought and discovered the spiritual worship of one God without a second in the midst of numerous misleading conceptions of many gods and goddesses in our scriptures. Both established their religious organisations and missions on the basis of Sanātana Dharma or the eternal religion of the Vedas, which remains untouched and unaffected in the midst of changes and evolution, because it is the principle, the essence, the kernel, the root from which all other truths can be deduced or developed. The Veda is not any particular book or system but the Logos, the divine reason which is the imperish-

able, and inexhaustible source of all revelations and inspirations to mankind, which is the direct and immediate cause of all religious reformations and social regenerations, the basis of all modes of moral discipline and spiritual culture, the root-spring of all transformations of hearts and manners in the lives of individuals as well as in the customs and traditions and institutions of nations on earth.

2. It is the faith in a Supreme Being and His revelations and inspirations to man that gave both these great teachers the spirit of heroic opposition to all the evils in the orthodox religion and society. They were the leaders of two Protestant movements in Hindusthán, which dissented from idolatrous rites and ceremonies, from priestcraft and *guru*-dom, and which enjoined the liberty of conscience and reason in matters of caste, early marriage, widowism and similar social tyrannies and injustices.

3. Both these Rishis of the modern age laid emphasis on work and service as the essential condition of salvation, and as the very definition of worship. Sacrifice of evil

passions and thoughts formed part of their daily religious practice, just as the performance of a *Yajña* was the sacred duty with a priest of Vedic India. Besides, charity, benevolence, elevation of the depressed classes, giving shelter to the orphans, the blind and the cripple, spreading the light of education amongst the masses, as well as founding and maintaining philanthropic institutions, have been placed in the forefront of the mission programme of both the Sannyāsīs.

4. While recognising in the elements of Bhakti and Karma, the perennial springs of religious emotion and moral earnestness, they were not less mindful of the importance of *Jñān* or intellectual culture in the religious life of India. God-consciousness was for them impossible without the enlightenment or illumination of the soul. Hence the necessity of a devout study of the scriptures and an equally devout study of the sciences,—which are the revelations of the workings of God in the human spirit and in the physical world.

5. Lastly, the lives of both these heroes may aptly be illustrated by the picture of a stream, which has its origin in the lofty

heights of the Himalayas, and which after fertilising and purifying the sandy desert and the barren soil of the plains, and removing the wants of millions of thirsty souls, ultimately loses itself in the bosom of the infinite ocean. The river is the link between the mountain and the ocean. So is the life of Maharshi Devendranath a harmony of the mountain type and the ocean type. He is a householder and yet an ascetic, living in the world and having intercourse with family and society, and yet rising above the world's trials and temptations, and free from the attachment of the home and its sweet attractions. Like the river, he came down from the hills at the command of his Master, not to enjoy the pleasures of the earth, but rather to serve his fellowmen even at the risk of losing his own purity and calmness, till he could attain his well-earned rest in the bosom of the Father. The same is true of Maharshi Dayānanda. Himself an ascetic and a *Brahmachāri*, he still enjoyed the life of a *grihastha* or householder among his fellowmen, and depriving himself of the pacific calm of the Himalayan ranges, he

wandered from one end of the country to another, preaching pure morality and religion according to his own light.

Whatever may be the verdict of humanity on the points where Devendranath and Daya'nanda differ, one thing stands out clear and certain after an analysis of their lives and teachings, *viz.*, that the salvation of our country lies along the path and the direction in which both these Maharshis of modern age serve as our common guide. It would indeed be disastrous for our national life if the youngmen of India, blinded by a false national pride or prejudice, question the fitness or worthiness of these two great leaders to guide them safe to their divinely appointed goal along the path indicated in common by the precepts and examples of both.

(III) BRAHMA'NANDA KESHAB CHANDRA SEN—

A Modern Indian Yogi.

Keshab Chandra Sen is one of the few Indians who have, by the loftiness of their teachings and the sublimity of their lives, secured for our country an imperishable

glory' and for her spiritual treasures a world-wide recognition. He was a prophet, a saint and a seer of the modern age, and is rightly recognised by his followers as belonging to the same rank of God-men as a Buddha or a Jesus, a Mahomet or a Chaitanya. Born a few centuries earlier, he would certainly have passed for an Incarnation of God, and an incarnation he really was in the only sense in which that epithet can be applied to man, *viz.*, as a visible manifestation of the invisible Spirit of God in human nature. I would like to study his life as that of a Representative Man, to use the words of Emerson. He embodies and represents in his character all that is best and highest in man ; our ideals and aspirations are transformed into flesh and blood as it were in the life of Keshab Chandra Sen. And yet his greatness does not carry him to a transcendental level, but his human failures and imperfections bring him all the nearer and make him all the dearer to us. The characteristics of a Representative Man, as exemplified in the life of Keshab Chandra, may be analysed into the following features :—

(1) *The Spirit of Harmony*.—His life and teachings are nothing if not a rational and practical attempt at reconciling ancient wisdom with modern science, the material progress of the west with the spiritual calm of the east. The religion of the Brahmo Samaj, to which he infused a new life, "recognises in all prophets and saints a harmony, in all scriptures a unity, and through all dispensations a continuity ; it abjures all that separates and divides, and always magnifies unity and peace ; it harmonises reason and faith, *Yoga* and *Bhakti*, asceticism and social duty in their highest forms, and it shall make of all nations and sects one kingdom and one family in the fulness of time." This religion of harmony he not merely preached by word of mouth, but also *lived* and practised throughout his eventful career. His was a spirit that embraced all, comprehended all, reconciled all, and that is just what a representative man should be.

(2) *Spirit of Freedom*.—Man realises his freedom in knowledge, love and action. The free spirit of Keshab not only manifested itself in breaking off the fetters of dogmas

and creeds, of sectarianism and nationalism in its search for truth from all sources, gathering "the wisdom of the East and the West," but also in entering into the heart of nature and of human society, in studying their secrets, in drawing inspirations from those vast Books of God, open to all, but revealed to few. He had the freedom and the moral courage to wage war against the unmeaning traditions and superstitious customs of the contemporary society of India ; and he fought almost single-handed, but with remarkable success, the battle with injustice and falsehood, with selfishness and impurity, and held aloft the banner of spiritual religion and social reform at a time when his country was enveloped in the darkness of gross idolatry and sensual excesses even in religious rites and ceremonies, when enforced widowism and early marriage, drunkenness and luxury, immoral celibacy and Guruism were the order of the day. And yet in spite of this warlike spirit, was there a sweeter, more loving and more graceful personality than his ?

(3) *Spirit of Conscientiousness.*—Behind all his social, moral and spiritual endeavours

there was in Keshab the spirit of submission to the will of God. He listened to the inner promptings of conscience in his heart, and regulated the entire course of his life even to its minutest details in accordance with that "voice of God." He ushered into existence a new phase in the life of the Brahmo Samaj, in which the "call" of God became the dominating principle of action for every member, so that scrupulous adherence to duty, strict accuracy in speech, and spotless purity in thought and action soon came to be recognised as the distinguishing virtues of the Brahmos, who were often ridiculed by their light-hearted friends as members belonging to the society of 'perhaps' and 'shall try,' because of their studious avoidance of positive and assertive judgments about the past and future. This principle of following the dictates of conscience at all costs gave an impetus to the cause of social reform, lent a moral support and religious enthusiasm to the large body of converts to Brahmoism, who suffered social persecution at the hands of their orthodox relatives and friends, and sacrificed all their earthly comforts and

pleasures for the sake of their honest convictions.

(4) *Prayer and Repentance*.—"The first lesson," says Keshab in his Autobiography—known as the *Jivana-Veda*—"The first lesson from the scriptures of my life is Prayer." It was an instinctive spontaneous practice of his soul. Constant, unceasing prayer and an ever-present agonising sense of sin marked the beginning of his spiritual life, and led him onward to the region of the supersensible. His repentance for the *actual* imperfections of his life was as sincere and acute as for the *possible* evils which peeped into the corners of his thought, and he was ever watchful, ever active in searching self-criticism, till his heart became the holy temple of God and his face became radiant with the light of the smiling face of the heavenly Father. The child-like, spontaneous and sincere longing of the soul for spiritual wealth is always fulfilled. No earnest seeker after the Kingdom of Heaven has ever been refused and disappointed. And so it is that the life of Keshab Chandra, baptised in the religion of fire, and tried in the practice of asceticism,

bore its natural fruit in a new world-wide spiritual dispensation, rich in its blessings of love and joy and peace to India and to humanity.

(5) *Spiritual Genius*—There are various types of heroes ; we have political genius, men of scientific or philosophical genius, men of artistic genius ; all stand far above the common run, and reveal some new truths, and unfold some new mysteries about Nature or Mind. In our naked eyes the earth seems to be flat and stationary, while the scientific genius comes and tells us that it is round and moving at a terrific speed. Keshab's was a spiritual genius which made even more wonderful discoveries and displayed a far more penetrating insight into the deepest regions of the spiritual world than the scientists have ever done with regard to the physical world. For Keshab dived beneath the appearances of things, and removed the veils of ignorance and imperfection, of sins and sufferings from the face of the earth ; and discovering the real source of all truth and goodness and beauty, the fountainhead of love and joy

and bliss in the Supreme Being who is man's highest self, he went out to preach the gospel of peace and harmony and freedom to the heavy-laden, sorrow-stricken and benighted children of God. While on earth, he had already tasted of the sweetness of the nectar of immortal life, and he had already found in human love the echo of the eternal music and in human home the picture of the kingdom of heaven. Faith in the unseen reality gave him a new vision ; and realising that the spirit is above the laws of time and space and can work miracles by sharing in the omnipotence of God, his creative genius formulated that *wonderful arithmetic*, which could set at naught all worldly calculations and prudential considerations and boldly venture forth into a costly undertaking, depending for its completion on no other wealth than silent prayer and the free gift of heaven.

Such was Keshab Chandra Sen, who has rightly earned the epithet of '*Brahmānanda*' or one whose supreme joy is in Brahma or

the Infinite. All homage to him, not as a leader of the Brahmo Samaj nor as a Bengal Reformer, nor even as a great son of India, but as a great Yogi and as a Representative Man.

VIII.

PROSPECT OF UNIVERSAL THEISM IN INDIA.

*"Shrinvantu visve, amritasya putráh,
A' ye dháma'ni divyá'ni tasthuh"*

"Hear, O ye sons of the immortal Being,—
ye that dwell in the heavenly region."

*"Veda'hameta'm purusham mahántam
A'ditya-varnam tamasah purastát,
Tasneva viditwa' atimrityum eti,
Ná'nyah panthá' vidyate ayaná'ya."*

"I have known that great person, who shines with the splendour of the sun from beyond the region of darkness. By knowing Him alone one can attain immortality, there is no other way of crossing the ocean of death".

The Rishis who uttered these verses were filled with joy at their new discovery. They proclaimed to the immortal denizens of heaven that they had found out the

key to the mysteries of life and death in the Supreme Being. By knowing Him alone one could get beyond the reach of death ; there is no other means of deliverance accessible to man. What an outburst of rejoicing is indicated in these simple words ! Rejoice, O ye immortal gods of heaven ! Rejoice, O ye angels and seers and sages ! Rejoice, O ye saints and yogis ! Rejoice, O ye stars and planets ! Let this rejoicing spread from land to land, from age to age. Those that have eyes, let them see, and those that have ears, let them hear. It was a sacred day, fit to be engraved in golden letters in the history of humanity, when this important truth, this life-giving and death-killing truth was discovered by our spiritual ancestors,—a discovery which is infinitely more valuable than that of Archimedes, who went mad over a scientific truth and ran about declaring, “I have found it,” “I have found it,” and more valuable than that of Sir Isaac Newton relating to the law of gravitation.

The anniversary of the Theistic Church in India should be for us an occasion for

rejoicing, as intense and as sincere as that of the Rishis, who proclaimed the reality of the Supreme Being and to whom belongs the credit of finding the soul in man. For we re-discovered on this day* the ultimate truths left us by our ancient sages. We are the spiritual heirs of the Rishis, and it was on the foundation-day of the Bráhma Samaj in Bengal and of the Pràrthanà Samaj in Bombay that we reasserted our birth-rights to those spiritual treasures which give us the secret of life and death. Let us, therefore, rejoice and pay our homage and tribute of gratitude to our great ancestors who discovered and also to those modern Rishis who re-discovered the truths about God and the soul.

The message of the liberal and universal Theistic movement in India is contained in a few simple mottos, which give us a whole treasure-house of sublime truths in a nut-shell. One couplet is sufficient to solve the religious problem of the age. It runs thus:—

*“Subishá'lam idam viswam
 pavitram Brahma-mandiram,
 Chetah sunirmmalam tirtham
 satyam shá'stram anashwaram.”*

"This vast universe is the holy temple of God. A pure heart is the sacred place of pilgrimage, and truth eternal is the immortal scripture." This is the new way of expressing the old religion of the Upanishads. God is to be worshipped in the temple of the universe and in the sanctuary of the pure heart. His revealed truths are to be recognised in all scriptures, in all truths of science and philosophy, of art and morality. In this land of ours there is no want of temples ; in every village and town there is a temple supposed to be dedicated to religious worship. Thousands and millions of pilgrims are visiting holy places. Different communities are following different scriptures, the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Gita, the Smritis, the Puranas, the Bible, the Koran, the Zend Avesta and the Grantha Shahib. But these temples are either deserted, or have become the abode of false gods or idols. Pilgrims are wasting their religious emotions in mechanical rites and ceremonies, which have lost their meaning in the hands of lifeless priests ; the holy places have become scenes of unholy practices. The scriptures of India have remained dead letter

even to the privileged twice-born classes. It has therefore been necessary to restore the purity of worship, to realise the spirituality of pilgrimages and to re-discover the hidden meaning of revealed truths or scriptures. This the founders of the Brahmo Samaj and Prārthanā Samaj have done by going back to the original spring of all religious streams in India, to the old Upanishads of the devout Rishis, who were the first to discover the ultimate basis of spiritual life.

The fundamental principles of religious practice in the Theistic Church of modern India are the same as in the Upanishads and Bhaktishāstras of old, viz.—*Ekameva advitīyam*, one God without a second, *Satyam eva jayate*—truth alone triumpheth, *Brahma-kripā'hi kevalam*—God's mercy alone availeth. The *mantras* of A'rādhana and Prā'rthanā adopted in these Samajes were also taken from the Rishis of the Upanishads. But the religion of the Brahma Samaj and the Prārthanā Samaj is not merely a revival of our ancient Vedic religion in its purity and simplicity ; it is a spiritual synthesis of the truths of all the scriptures, a meeting-

ground of all the prophets and seers, of saints and *bhaktas* of the east as well as of the west. Thus Buddha and Christ, Mahomet and Chaitanya, Nanak and Kavi, Tukaram and Namdev have been invited to join our spiritual feast, and they are all contributing to and enriching the religious experiences and practices of our members.

This Theistic Church represents *the soul of India*. It stands in the midst of the prevalent materialism, agnosticism, scepticism and atheism of the modern age to proclaim to the world the reality of the soul and to enjoin upon man the sacred duty of prayer and worship. Wherein does the greatness of our country consist? Not in her mills and factories, not in her commerce and industry, not in the economic prosperity and political activity of her people, if any, not even in her intellectual achievements and social institutions. But in the eyes of our spiritual ancestors, in the eyes of the saints and sages of the world, the greatness of India lies in the eternal truths hidden in her holy scriptures, as well as in the sweet music of hymns sung in her

sacred temples, and above all, in the sublime and rare art of manufacturing souls,—an art that is being industriously and patiently developed by her spiritual geniuses. Hundreds of Rajas and Maharajas have been born or created in our land during the last two centuries, but whose names will be recorded by the future historians of India with pride and glory? It is those of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Brahma'nanda Keshab Chandra Sen and the royal saints of their type, many of whom are perhaps little known to the outside world, but who knew more than any other favourite son of Fortune how to invest their natural and spiritual gifts in the most sacred and profitable business of manufacturing souls. I consider them to be the greatest sons of India, because they were true to the mission of India, because they had the clarity of vision and depth of insight which enabled them to recognise the important truth that the glory of India's past lay in her discovery of the soul and that the brightness of her future will depend on her faith in the reality of prayer. The Rishis of the

Upanishads had a vision of the sacred destiny of India, when they proclaimed, "*Ātmā bhāre drashtavyah śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitaḥ, ātmano bhāre darsānena, śravanena matya' vijñānena idam sarvam viditam.*" i. e. "Verily the soul is to be seen, heard, thought about, and meditated upon. If the soul is seen, heard, contemplated on, and comprehended, then all this is known." They knew that it is for the sake of the soul that man loves his wife, children, wealth, cattle and everything that is dear to him. (*Na bhāre putrasya kāmāya putrah priyo bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya putrah priyo bhavati etc.*) The Theistic Church is therefore fulfilling the divinely appointed mission of India by holding fast to the sacred traditions of our spiritual forefathers and promoting the culture of the soul in our countrymen.

There are seasons of the spirit as there are seasons in nature. Now we are elated with joy at the advent of the beautiful spring days, now we are depressed at the sight of the dreary winter. During the various religious festivals of our community we experience

mingled feelings of joy and sorrow as in a period of transition from one season to another. Then we have our days of stock-taking, of closing the accounts of the year and preparing the balance-sheet of income and expenditure in our spiritual household. We offer our hearty thanks to the Divine Father if we have had a rich harvest, and shed tears of repentance at His feet for all our failures and short-comings. This alternation of optimism and pessimism is the natural sign of a living religion and indicates a healthy vitality in the spirit of the individual. But there are some hearts that never experience even on festive occasions the elevating spiritual influence of the flood of light and joy and of love and inspiration that passes over the body of the congregation, and they are therefore constantly oppressed by the cooling thought of despair at the poor harvest of the season. They see nothing but division and dissension in our organisations and nothing but inertia and lifelessness in our thoughts and activities. They speak of the decline of the Theistic church, nay of her death and extinction as a religious

organism. They join hands with scoffers and fault-finders, the atheists and sceptics, who consider the mission of the liberal religious movement representing universal Theism 'to have been long fulfilled, and therefore deride at the tedious and superfluous humming of the handful of flies and insects that hover around the temples of the Brahmo Samaj. They predict that the Theistic Churches of India are sure to fall down in natural course within a decade or so, and demand that these ought to be pulled down or sold out or leased out for 99 years for the promotion of worthier ends. This spirit of hostile criticism against the liberal religious movement has got so far abroad that the members of the movement themselves are in danger of regarding it as an unanswerable challenge and of being fatally infected with the morbid disease of pessimism. To fight against this evil, we require living witnesses to give evidences from the history of religious thought as well as from direct personal experiences as to the glorious successes and achievements of the mission of the Theistic church in the past, her rich contributions to the life and thought

of the Indian nation and to the *sa'dhan* or practice of spiritual life of the individual in the present, as well as her message of hope and faith, of love and goodwill, of service and sacrifice for the future.

Those who constantly harp on the string of pessimism generally ascribe the so-called decline or failure of the liberal 'religious movement to one or all of the following causes :—

(1) Universal Theism is a *theoretical* or *intellectual religion*, which may satisfy the philosophical mood of certain types of rationalists, but which can offer no practical guide to the seekers after spiritual life. Its preaching is more theological than devotional and it has produced a society of thinkers and debaters, rather than of pious and active saints. Its message is therefore confined to a handful of educated Indians, whereas the vast masses of the illiterate refuse to accept its teachings. The sterility of the movement on this account is proved by reference to the census returns, according to which the population of these religious liberals is almost at a standstill.

(2) It is an *eclectic* religion—a mixture

of eastern and western ideas, and of elements taken at random from the Hindu, Mahomedan and Christian scriptures. It has the appearance of a patchwork and is in reality a time-serving contrivance which can accommodate itself to the tastes and conveniences of individuals professing different shades of opinions and convictions. It fails to capture the imagination of ordinary men and women.

(3) It is a *worldly religion*—which is a contradiction in terms, because religion has always been concerned with the supra-mundane affairs and secured the other-worldly interests of man. The Theistic church identifies the services rendered to one's family, society and state with the service of God and thereby sanctifies secular activities and deifies man. This results in so much dissipation of energy and creates a disposition of selfishness, and means nothing but the identification of God with Mammon and of Heaven with the earth. Such formulas as "Work is Worship", "Living is praying," "To enjoy is to obey" may be and have been abused in the community of Theistic worshippers in favour of gross worldliness and sensualism.

Before answering these charges, it is worth noting that even if they were true, these points of weakness would rather indicate the sources of strength of the liberal Theistic movement, for, the most perfect organism is also the most delicate and complex, and its members are most likely to develop very slowly and to decline most rapidly.

Let us examine the validity of these charges one by one.

I.

(a) In religion we cannot give up theory and speculation altogether. Knowledge and action are closely interwoven with the religious emotion. A religion need not be creed-bound, and we can as easily dispense with the formulae and symbols with which a religion identifies itself at a particular age as we can do away with the turban which decorates rather than protects our head. But we can no more discard the reasoning function of the religious man than we can sever the head from the trunk of a living body without impairing its vitality and annulling its existence. Universal Theism is therefore not to be condemned if it seeks a rational basis

for its principle, and rests on a sound philosophical system, the knowledge of which can be communicated to all seekers after truth through suitable methods varying according to their capacity and stage of culture.

It is rather an adamant rock—this philosophical foundation of the liberal religion,—which secures it against the age-long attacks of sceptics and atheists, and shelters it from the corroding influences of doubts and unbeliefs that trouble the despairing and afflicted souls.

(b) But universal Theism is not a mere theory. It is a living whole which harmonises Jna na, Bhakti and Karma,—a continuation and consummation of the traditional trinity of ways, modified according to the demands of the progressive age. It has taken up within itself the entire movement of the Indian religious spirit through the various stages of history, thus assimilating the intuitive recognition of the Fatherhood of God and the spontaneous out-pouring of the heart in prayer, as revealed in the Vedic hymns, the reflective self-consciousness and realisation of God through

knowledge, which dominated the age of the the Upanishads, the self-renunciation and suppression of egotism through austere moral discipline and service of love, as we find in the Buddhistic period, and lastly the phases of Bhakti, of intense love for and personal devotion to God as our Lord and Preceptor, as our Father and Friend, or as our Husband (or Wife), which manifested themselves in the Puranic and Vaishnava literature. If proofs were needed for the truth of this statement, we could simply refer to the lives of the leaders of the liberal religious movement,—Raja Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore and Brahmañanda Keshubchandra Sen. Are they not striking illustrations of the harmony of knowledge, emotion and activity in the organic life of the spirit, rather than specimens of mutilated intellect or reason?

(c) The allegation that Universal Theism is a religion suited to the educated few and cannot appeal to the illiterate masses can be easily met by the reply that India is fast approaching the stage of free compulsory primary education, when the darkness of ignorance will be entirely dispelled and the

case of illiterate masses will be a thing of the past. The Theistic movement is itself contributing largely to the cause of the spread of education, and what with its schools and colleges, what with its missions for the improvement of the backward classes, it is cutting at the root of this shaky support of its enemy, so that we may confidently assert on the strength of this very allegation that the triumph of liberal Theism is as certain in the near future as that of the movement for universal education in India.

But the premisses of this charge are not valid. Liberal Theism has been successfully preached among the ignorant masses, even among hill-tribes, wherever an attempt has been made. The works of Rev. Nilmani Chakravarti in the Khasi Hills and of Babu Sasipada Banerji at Baranagar are standing refutations of such erroneous ideas. Unfortunately it is the want of funds and of preachers that is mainly responsible for the poor harvest that we have hitherto reaped in the mission field, and it is this poor harvest that creates the wrong notion mentioned above.

Then the question arises, why does not the message of Brāhmoism find such an easy access to the hearts and homes of the educated Indians as that of other religious movements of modern India ? Why is it that while the Arya Samaj, the Ramkrishna-Vivekanand Mission and the Theosophical Society are winning followers by tens of thousands from the orthodox Hindu community, the Theistic movement of religious liberals can count so few and its numerical strength increases so slowly ? The reason is simple. It is not because the religion of the Theistic church is very difficult to understand but because it is so very *difficult to practise*. It goes a longer way and demands a larger sacrifice in the path of reform in the individual and social life than any of the above-mentioned movements. It is not an arm-chair religion, not a religion made easy, but it involves courage to face persecution, to embrace poverty and privation, excommunication and disinheritance ; it demands the strength of mind to discard all the evils of our social customs and institutions that are perpetuated in the name of national vanity and tradition, as well

as the rational insight to discriminate the universal and the permanent features of the religious dispensations of antiquity from their accidental and transient phases which are merely propped by the national pride and the irrational sentiments of the races of mankind. . The acceptance of the principles of the Theistic church means wearing the crown of thorns and bearing the cross of suffering in all humility,—a trial which few educated Indians are prepared to submit to.

(d) The Census returns are not always reliable as regards the numerical strength of the members belonging to the Theistic churches, as the latter are often identified with their brethren of the orthodox community in India. There are perhaps more numerous liberal Theists outside the Brahmo Samajes or the Prārthanā Samajes than in their official lists of members and subscribers. But what is there in mere *number*? The *quality* too has to be counted. The number of dead persons in the world is always in the majority, but a living man can dispose of hundreds and thousands of dead bodies. Did not one Socrates bring about a radical

change in the speculative atmosphere of Greece? Did not a few disciples of Jesus put a stamp on the character of the mighty Roman Empire? Is not the liberal Theistic movement with its handful of followers moulding the life and thought of the whole Indian nation through its literature and art, its social reforms and religious practices?

II.

(a) There is a continuous evolution of Religion in humanity. Through all the dispensations of the world there runs a progressive revelation of the spirit of God. Behind all the conflicting types of religious thought, and within all the varieties of sacred scriptures or sublime utterances of prophets and seers, there is to be discovered an inner harmony. This conviction forms the dominating spirit of the Theistic church. It is not eclectic but *synthetic*, not a congeries of parts, but *an organic unity* which gives law and system to all elements and stages of religious evolution in human history; it is the guiding principle that dominates the growth and development of the modern movements for emancipation of the human spirit from the

bondage of ignorance and inertia. It is at once a new interpretation of life and a new activity. It is the universal religion that has differentiated itself in a variety of forms and practices suited to the age, the condition, the climate, and the temperament of each nation and every individual. In the light of this view of the religion of liberal Theism it is not difficult to explain why the founder of this church, Raja Rammohan Roy, is taken to be a Hindu, a Mahomedan or a Christian by the respective communities of India, according to the aspects of his comprehensive life to which their attention is directed for the time being. This is why this movement has given stimulus to all the historical religions of the world for a move in the right direction of internal reforms, through which they are sure to be brought to a level in which they will recognise their unity with all the rest of the dispensations and feel the necessity of a mutual give and take, of fellow-feeling and co-operation. For instance in the Punjab, where the bitterness of religious differences is at its intensest, the liberal Theistic movement is preparing the soil for the growth of a spirit of toleration

and friendliness among the various denominations,—and that through the revival of Sikhism in the purely spiritual and universalistic form given to it by its founder, through the reform of the ancient Vedic religion as initiated by the progressive wing of the Arya Samaj, and through an awakening of the Sanātana Dharma with all its spiritual treasures. The Theistic church has come to solve the problem of Hindu-Mahomedan conflict once for all by enabling both the communities to realise that they are fellow-pilgrims to the same temple of God and children of the same divine Father, and by bringing together all the elements that are valuable in both.

(b) Even if the religion of the liberal Theists were nothing but a mixture of all that is best and highest in the existing religions of the world, it would still be recognised as the fittest to survive and most conducive to the health and strength of the Indian nation. According to modern medical authorities mixed diet is preferable to simple diet and has to be prescribed for all normal and adult constitutions. Again, honey is prepared from the juice of various

kinds of flowers and yet its sweetness is not to be identified with that of any individual flower. So with the religion of Universal Theism, which reconciles the various elements of value in the world-religions and thereby attains a higher stage of development and creates a new value for itself.

(c) In a living organism there is a complex adjustment of members to one another and to the whole, which at once secures its stability and elasticity. The fact that Universal Theism draws its life-blood and nourishment from all the prophets and scriptures of the world and assimilates them by its own vitality and according to its own internal principle of adaptation and synthesis—not only lends to it its complexity, richness and vigour but also adds to its stability and elasticity. The various factors in the life of the Theistic movement are so related to one another that like the cords fastening a boat to a pole on the shore they are supplementary to one another, and when one factor fails another comes to its help. The metaphors of course are not to be stretched too far, but the main point retains its force all the same.

(d) The point may be extended a little further. If the Theistic community has adopted the institution of public worship from the Christian church, and assimilated the spirit of social service and philanthropic activities as well as the proselytising organisation from the Christian missionaries, as is often alleged, it is not because such things are Christian, but because they are human, because they are rational, and are therefore universal possessions of all men and all ages. The same might be said about the elements of monotheism and spiritual worship and the equality of all believers, which Raja Rammohun Roy is said to have adopted from the Mahomedan religion, as against idolatry and caste system of Hinduism. Here as else-where Brahmoism has sought to combine the spirit of the East with that of the West, the ideas of antiquity with those of the modern age, not by way of imitation but rather of organic assimilation.

III.

(a) The most important development in the religious consciousness of man during the modern age is to be traced in the effort

of the soul to overcome the dualism of the world and religion and to reconcile the spiritual life with the life on earth. Modern civilisation is based on the recognition of the necessity of moulding the materials of the world by the Ideas of the Spirit which have their origin and fulfilment in the Kingdom of Heaven. A religion which aims at satisfying the spirit of this civilisation must unite in itself all the factors and interests of human life and society. Liberal Theism stands for this unity and reconciliation and seeks to reconstruct the world according to the needs of the spirit.

It requires little imagination and understanding to realise that the spirit has as much need of the material universe as of the physical life. The spiritual life of man is largely dependent on the health and strength of the body and is sustained by the whole system of nature, by the starry heavens above as well as by the mountains and oceans below. The vast structure of the organic and inorganic world with its innumerable forces of heat, light, magnetism and electricity, and its mysterious vital

processes of respiration, circulation, digestion and reproduction, has to be comprehended as organic to the religious life and the spiritual function of man. The Theistic church recognises this interrelated and organic unity between the spiritual and the material world, and enjoins upon its followers to care as much for the preservation of the health of the body as for the nourishment of the soul. To live in this world means to be able to adjust the relations between the organism and its environments, to have powers to resist the constant encroachment of alien physical elements and of our fellow-creatures of the vegetable and animal kingdom, and even to turn them into our allies and co-workers.

But these powers can be acquired only through a knowledge of Nature, of the constitution and the laws of the growth of our organism as well as of our environments. Hence the necessity of the study of natural sciences and their application to the development of all our material resources for the spiritual welfare of man. Modern civilisation with its advancement of science and art and material prosperity is helping to secure

the freedom of the spirit over the laws of nature, that is, to express the same truth in popular religious terminology, to secure salvation or deliverance (*Mukti*) for the human race as well as for the individual soul. For, what sort of liberation could the religious man aspire after, if not the deliverance from the bondage of ignorance and illusion and their natural consequences, viz, disease, old age and death,—and an eternal progress in wisdom, love and good-will in a life beyond the veil of mortality till he attains the height of perfect divinity? You cannot therefore despise the so-called materialistic civilisation of the West, if you understand the requirements of your body and soul. The manner of your dressing, the system of your diet, the sanitary and hygienic propriety of your dwelling-place, your house-hold furniture, your educational institutions, literature and the rest are not external or foreign to your spiritual welfare, but form necessary ingredients in the life of the spirit. In this respect the Theistic church has made a distinct advance on the ascetic standpoint of the traditional religions of

India. If the evils of the world had led the religious minds of old to renounce the world and to retire into the inner psychical region, the Brahmo devotees are required to face these very evils boldly and to extirpate them from the face of the earth with all the weapons that modern Science and Art have placed at their disposal. We have thus brought the *para' vidya'* and *apara' vidya'* into an organic relation with each other. For to grow in spiritual life and to know the Infinite Brahma we must fight against all diseases of the body and of the mind and prevent their premature decay and destruction, and thus have a thorough command over the sciences of physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, astronomy, geology, mineralogy, psychology, sociology and the arts of medicine and surgery, agriculture and irrigation, commerce and navigation, education and Government, and so on.

(c) To see God in the world and the world in God, or to realise the identity of God and the soul is not a new thing in India, where the Vedantic conceptions have taken a deep root from antiquity. Nor is it a novel

idea to speak of men as sons of God. But do we not thereby commit ourselves to the belief that the wide universe is the sacred temple of God, that the human body is a sanctuary, that the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be sought outside in an imaginary future golden age, but to be established here on earth and realised in our very soul in this living present? And this is the position of new Theism which is not a religion of weakness, but a religion of power, not a religion of fear, but one of courage, not a religion of selfishness, but one of love, and that because it is based on the recognition of the infinite worth of man as the son of God and of his spiritual birth-right in the liberty of thought, speech and action, of his legitimate aspiration for participating in the omnipotence, omniscience and everlasting glory of his Divine Father.

(d) As to the allegation that this view of religion is likely to put a premium on worldliness and on a life of sensual enjoyment, it is sufficient to point out that it is the Theistic movement which has wedded religion with morality in modern India and inaugurated a

new age of social reform based on the principle of following the dictate of conscience as the voice of God within the human soul. A religion which teaches us to pray with the Prophet of Jerusalem, "Thy will be done..... Thy kingdom come," need not be afraid of losing itself in the snares of the world ; for it will always strive to transform the world in the light of higher and higher ideals revealed to human reason in course of spiritual culture and through practice of moral virtues ; and it will also enable its followers to rise above the cravings of the flesh and the agitations of the sensuous impulses till they are securely established in a life of constant communion with the Supreme Self.

IV.

We have examined the principal charges against the religion of universal and liberal Theism and found that they are either entirely false or contain germs of strength hidden in this movement. But the critics and opponents of the Theistic church may be silenced by still more forcible positive arguments in her favour. A clear and reasoned statement of the contributions of this movement

to the growth and development of national consciousness and to the wealth and variety of the types of individuality in our country will be sufficient to dispel all doubts as to its supreme worth and usefulness.

The progress of a nation can be judged (i) by the extent of the control it exercises over the processes of nature through the discoveries of sciences, inventions of machines and their practical application to the development of economical resources and the growth of industrial enterprises, (ii) by the stability and elasticity, the complexity and mobility of its social organisation, securing liberty, justice, equality and orderly progress and happiness to all its members, conserving all that is valuable in the past, promptly and efficiently adapting itself to the varying needs and requirements of the present, and providing for the security and welfare of the future generations, and (iii) by the character and personality of its individual members, their independence and mutual co-operation, their depth of spiritual experiences and richness of expression in thought, in art and in literature. Now, judged by these

standards, the Indian nation is still in its infancy ; but if there is any movement which has done more than all other similar organisations to awaken the self-consciousness of the new Indian nation and to lead it slowly but steadily along each of these three lines of progress, it is the small body of liberal Theists that can justly claim this proud privilege and glorious effort. The founder of the Theistic church, Raja Rammohan Roy, is universally recognised to be the father of modern India, the inaugurator of a new epoch of social and political regeneration, and the pioneer of constitutional agitation as well as of English education with all the blessings of western sciences that we are enjoying to-day. It is his hard toil in the midst of fierce opposition and persecution that has borne fruit even in the field of industrial and commercial activities, which are preparing the material and economical basis for the spiritual kingdom of Heaven in A'ryā-varta. The cry for self-government and Home-rule within the British Empire would not have been heard to-day, if the great Raja had not linked the East with the West in

indissoluble ties by his birth and ceaseless activity in India and his death and eternal rest in England, if a successive band of devoted workers like Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen, Pandit Sivanath Sa'stri, and the great Ananda-mohan Bose had not taken up the mission of Raja Rammohan Roy, and formed a society which declares war against injustice, against oppression, against tyranny, against social bondage, against superstitious customs and inhuman rites,—a society which upholds law and morality, loyalty and patriotism, the right of the individual to follow his reason and conscience and that of the community to claim service and self-sacrifice from the individual. This Theistic society condemns all forms of violence and anarchism, but welcomes such reforms as reconcile the national with the rational in our dress, diet, manners and habits. It rests not on status and birth, but on the principle of free contract and merit, and enjoins on its members the motto of "unity in things essential, liberty in things non-essential, and charity in all things."

Now, has this society lost its vitality

and stopped its activities to-day ? Has its message become stale and antiquated and its existence a superfluity in the midst of so many new movements carrying on the work of national advancement ? They that have eyes to see, let them behold, and they that have ears to hear, let them listen. Is not the Theistic Church still fighting against the evils of caste restriction, early marriage, enforced widowhood, dowry system, idolatry and priestcraft ? Is it not still removing the darkness of ignorance through the spread of education among the backward and "untouchable" classes ? Is it not still attempting to secure the solidarity of the Indian people through inter-dining and inter-marriage, through the harmonising of all scriptures and prophets, and by practising and upholding toleration, liberalism and cosmopolitan sympathies ? Is it not still carrying on a vigorous campaign against foreign importation of intemperance and luxury, of false doctrines of religion, of false conceptions of God and His relation to man and the world, as propagated by many western missionaries ? Is it not

making its influence felt in the country by its philanthropic activities in areas visited by flood and famine, by plague and small-pox, by malaria and consumption, and by its Depressed Classes Mission, Widows' Homes, Orphanages and other forms of humanitarian service? Has it not given birth to a new art and new literature in Bengal, which keeps pace with the latest movement of human thought and culture in the East and the West? Has it not re-organised family life on the basis of love and liberty and co-operation, changing the old social order based on fear and subjugation and isolation? Has it not given to women their due position in the public life of our country and at the same time trained them in the art of governing the most complex and delicate republican constitution on earth, viz. the home, where they have to perform the responsible task of creating and developing free spiritual personalities out of a drop of blood and a lump of flesh? Has it not made the lives of children healthier, sweeter and happier and their education and development less tedious and more enjoyable through the most up-to-date

methods of kindergarten and the promotion of juvenile literature of the most amusing and instructive kind in the vernacular ?

Is not the Theistic Church also elevating the tone of the social and religious movements of our country by maintaining a class of ministers and preachers who support the cause of reforms not for the sake of expediency, but from a strong sense of duty and righteousness and on the basis of spiritual Idealism ?

And finally, what is most important, has it not revived in our country the study of our ancient scriptures, the Vedas and the Upanishads, and built on them a mode of pure monotheistic worship in a spiritual congregation, where our soul is lifted up in prayer and repentance beyond the narrow sphere of our private interest, merged in the consciousness of our universal and infinite and eternal self in God, and purified by the identification in thought and will of our own good with the good of our society and of humanity at large ?

Turning now to the contribution of the Theistic Church to the formation of character

and the development of personality in the life of its members, we are inspired with confidence and optimism at the amazing sight of a galaxy of brilliant stars and at the encouraging thought of a highly cultured and intelligent mass of individuals. This Church is still producing, nourishing and sustaining the highest type of individuals of such a large variety as is represented by the world-poet Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, the world-scientists Sir Jagadischandra Bose and Sir Prafullachandra Ray, the encyclopaedic scholar Dr. Brajendranath Seal, the talented musician Babu Jyotirindranath Tagore, the veteran journalist Babu Ramananda Chatterji, the distinguished educationist Principal Herambachandra Maitra, the eminent lawyer and Governor Lord Satyendraprasanna Sinha, the able administrator Sir Krishna Gobinda Gupta, the God-fearing patriot Sir N. G. Chandavarkar, and the renowned Orientalist Sir R. G. Bhandarkar. The vitality of such a movement cannot be questioned by any except those who are blinded by prejudice and ignorance. But the triumph of the Theistic Church does not consist merely in the greatness and goodness

of these few eminent personalities, although a single towering genius is a sufficient indication of the high level of moral purity and sublime spirituality attained by a society, as the example of one Sîtâ or Sâvitrî proves the grandeur of the womanhood of ancient India. Those who speak of this movement as dying or declining should come and observe what is going on in the heart of the average member of the Theistic Church. They will then discover the glorious achievements of this church in the performance of wonderful spiritual miracles which transform the sinners into saints, which enable the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak and the lame to walk. It is not an exaggeration but a bare statement of fact to say that Brahmoism has introduced a new system of spiritual culture or *Sâdhan* through its form of Divine Service and its practice of *Arâdhanâ*, which makes even the commonest man feel the presence of God in nature and in society, teaching him to spiritualise everything, to recognise the Infinite in the insignificant, and to realise the worth and dignity of his own self as the spiritual heir of God's

creation. No lovelier and more impressive picture of heaven can be conceived than the sight of a devout family of liberal Theists, man, wife and children, sitting at the feet of the Divine Father in daily prayer. During the moments of his intense religious emotion, the devotee of the Theistic church vividly realises the presence of God in his family, in his father, mother, wife and children, each of whom represents to him the visible manifestation of the living God, demanding or begging his love and service. All members of the Theistic faith will bear testimony to the miraculous influence of Theistic worship on their life. They will gratefully bear witness to the healing effects of the divine grace, the life-giving and strength-giving grace, the enlightening and inspiring grace, the redeeming and saving grace, the ever-flowing and never-failing grace, the all-forgiving and all-beneficent grace,—that the Theistic Church has showered on their life. They will all confess that they are living, moving and having their being in this grace. They will declare before the public and before their congregation that they have felt the touch of

the hand of God, that they have heard His call, that they have recognised His providential dispensation in all the events of their life. Were they not weary and heavy-laden and did He not give them rest? Were they not diseased and did He not make them whole? Were they not in poverty and distress, and did He not make them rich in spirit? Were they not broken-hearted in grief and disappointment and did He not grant them peace and consolation? Have they not tasted of the sweetness of His *nām* when they were hungering and thirsting after spiritual life, and have they not experienced the touch of the Immortal Being in the embrace of their beloved ones? Will they not proclaim before the world the message of *Brahma-kripāhikevalm*, or "God's grace alone availeth"? We are saved by His grace, a thousand times saved. What are these men but worms and insects without His grace? They would have been nothing more than a speck of dust but for the Theistic Church which has given them life and soul through the grace of God. Will they not take possession of their spiritual heritage and live in conscious recognition

of the highest ideal of humanity which has been revealed to the Theistic Church and say that their sense of imperfection is itself a sign of life and not of death? Will they not confess in all humility that they are trying to follow the footsteps of the Rishis of old, who have given them the spiritual 'treasures' of the Vedas and the Upanishads? Will they not proclaim with those sages that they have found out the way, that they have known the Immortal Spirit, by knowing whom alone one can reach beyond the region of darkness and death and enter into the land of everlasting life and light and glory? Let them remind their countrymen—"there is no other way to Immortality."

IX

INDIA AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSION.

It is at once a proof and a result of the supremacy of religious consciousness that no other impulse fills the human soul with a greater courage and vigour, or enables it to endure greater hardships and privations, or prepares it for a nobler and more heroic self-sacrifice than the motive of preaching one's own religion. We are all more or less interested in science and philosophy, in art and literature, and would gladly pay subscriptions to a Kant Society or a Goethe Gesellschaft ; but who amongst us is ready to sacrifice his comforts and pleasures, to leave his wife and children behind, to encounter trials and sufferings in strange lands, to meet inclement weather and inhospitable climate, to embrace the difficulties of strange languages and manners and to risk life among savages,—with the sole object of securing members for the Kant Society or diffusing

aesthetic culture according to Goethe and Wagner among the aliens and savages? Yet under the inspiration of religion man has done all this and a good deal more. It is the glory of the human soul, that it cannot treasure up the things of the spirit in its private chest, but feels divinely called to go out and distribute them throughout the world. This is only natural, because religion is concerned with the central truths of the universe and the deepest regions of human life, because in the sphere of religion, man is taught to seek the kingdom of Heaven first and not the satisfaction of his transient and temporal desires, because through spiritual culture the religious man aims at the regeneration of his whole being and not the mere advancement of his partial interests, and because in religious experience man enters into a spiritual communion with the heart of Reality and finds the key to liberation from the sins and sorrows that beset his worldly life. It is therefore natural that the religious man should invite his fellowmen to come and share with him the blessings of salvation. This is the motive that led the Buddhistic missionaries in the past to the remotest corners of the

ancient world, and this is the motive that actuates a number of Christian missionaries to-day to go out and convert the heathen world. Hence those who come to preach the gospel to us deserve our reverence and admiration for their zeal and devotion to the noblest end that a mortal may have before him, viz. that of saving one's fellow-men from sins and sufferings,—even though the means they propose may not be acceptable to us. The Christian missionaries are an educating force in our country, holding before us the example of fervent enthusiasm and heroic self-denial for a cause held sacred. Besides, the manifold philanthropic activities of the Christians missionaries compel recognition from, and even win the admiration of, those who are the strongest opponents of the creeds and dogmas of the Christian Church. By spreading education, by the dissemination of western science and culture, by founding schools and colleges, by distributing medicine and establishing hospitals, by giving shelter to the cripple, the orphans and the homeless, by elevating the backward classes, they have not only served to diminish

the quantity of ignorance and suffering in our country, but have also aroused the educated Indians to a new sense of responsibility and stimulated them to undertake and organise charitable institutions on western lines. These benefits must be gratefully acknowledged by every impartial and unprejudiced student of modern Indian life.

On the other hand, the labours of these servants of Jesus have not been wholly unrewarded. Educated India is willingly or unwillingly absorbing the spirit of Christ, inasmuch as English literature with its Christian ideas, with its quotations from the Bible, is ever feeding the journals and magazines of modern India and thereby preparing the country for the appreciation of what is true, eternal and valuable in Christianity. The greatest achievement of the Christian mission in India seems to me to consist in the fact that by holding before us the holy life and the lofty teachings of the Prince of Prophets, it has added to our ancient heritage of religious treasures. The mighty stream of a sublime world-religion, accumulating in its bed the moral and spiritual

culture of the western nations for nearly twenty centuries, flows over and fertilises our soil, thanks to the energy and enterprise of the Christian Missions.

If after all these concessions one would ask me whether Christianity has any chance of being the universal religion of India in the near or distant future, my answer is emphatically in the negative. And the reason is as follows :—

India has from times immemorial been the home of religions. To a student of religious history and of philosophy of religion, India presents an extensive, interesting and instructive field of research. Here one can study the psychology of religious life with all its truths and errors, as well as the history of the origin, growth and decay of religions in minute details, and thus observe the survival of the permanent, the universal and the essential elements of religion amidst all changes and varieties of local and accidental character. Now, by virtue of her varied experiences in religious life, India has developed an extraordinary power of adapting herself to all vicissitudes of spiritual condition and of

assimilating what is best and highest in the religions of the hostile intruders who have disturbed her natural calm and of the friendly neighbours who have come into contact with her from time to time. Owing to the divinely bestowed blessings of the spirit of synthesis, reconciliation and toleration, she has always made accommodations for divergent types of spiritual culture and conflicting systems of theology and philosophy without losing her self-identity, and has always found in the eternal verities of religion the solution for all petty differences of creeds and dogmas. The prevailing religion of India, Hinduism, has been, as Garbe says, "in constant flux, which can absorb everything with whatever it comes in contact." It is for these reasons that while socially and politically India has passed through periods of decay and degradation, the vitality of her spiritual life has remained intact through all ages, and that from time to time a Buddha or a Sankara, a Rāmañuja or a Kabir, a Chaitanya, a Nanak or a Rammohan has made his appearance on the stage, preached against the evils and superstitions of the prevalent

religious conceptions and practices, and has reconciled all sectarian quarrels under the wide principle of "Love of God and brotherhood of man."

If we remember these truths about the spiritual genius of India, we can easily understand why the educated Indians can highly appreciate the life and teachings of Christ, gradually assimilate the Christian spirit of serving God through the service of humanity, or even adopt the Christian modes of worshipping and proselytising, as has been done by members of the Brahmo Samaj, and yet refuse to accept the Christian religion in the way in which missionaries offer it. For the people of India have got the means of discriminating the true from the erroneous and superstitious, the universal from the local, the permanent from the transient, and the essential from the accidental elements in Christianity. They can make a distinction between the religion of Christ and the religion about Christ, between what we may call real Christianity and what is merely nominal or false Christianity. The religion of Christ, as presented to us in the first four gospels, if rightly understood, is nothing but

pure and simple Theism, which has been and will be the religion of India, and which therefore demands no fresh recognition or change of confession from our countrymen. Thus the conceptions of God and His relation to man, which find expression in the Lord's Prayer and in such utterances as "Love the Lord, thy God, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and love thy neighbour as thyself," and "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect", are not at all new to us. This pure and undefiled religion of Christ does not demand the acceptance of a particular creed or dogma, but only a thorough change of the heart and entire resignation to the will of God, the service of fellow-men and the endeavour to realise the kingdom of God on earth. As Seeley observes, "Those who consider an elaborate creed essential to Christian character must pronounce Christ's first disciples utterly unworthy to bear the name of Christians." On the other hand, what we are offered by the missionaries in the name of Christianity is a religion about Christ, invented by his later followers,—which demands a belief in the

supernatural birth and death of Jesus, in his performance of physical miracles, in eternal heaven and hell, in a plurality of Gods and in an elaborate code of dogmas.

Now, as to faith in the divinity of Jesus and all the consequences of the theory of incarnation involved in it, the Christian missionaries might learn a very valuable lesson from the religious history of India. When one learns how a Rama, a Krishna, or a Buddha had been raised from the position of a gifted moral and religious teacher to the dignity of a representative of God, and then worshipped as the one and only God, when one learns how around the birth, life and death of such great men there gathered in course of time legends of supernatural and super-human character, how even within the last few centuries a Chaitanya and a Ramkrishna have been made into divine incarnations by their disciples,—one can reasonably suspect that the supernatural in the life of Christ had the same historical and psychological origin. This is now admitted by the Unitarians in England and America and by the "Liberal Theologians" in Germany. In fact the latest researches of western scholars

and Biblical critics indicate that Christianity is indebted to India for many of her beliefs and practices. I shall here mention only a few instances of what the writers of the New Testament have unmistakably borrowed from the Buddhistic scriptures. Thus according to Garbe and other competent critics, (1) the Biblical descriptions of the worship of child Jesus by Simeon and of the joyous festivity in heaven after his birth are imitations from the Asita story in Buddhist scriptures ; (2) the story of the temptations of Jesus by Satan is a copy of Buddha's conquest over Mára ; (3) the miracles of Peter's walking upon the sea, and (4) of Christ's distribution of five loaves among five thousand hungry men, as related in the Bible, also find their original in Buddhistic scriptures. (5) Besides, some of the parables in the Christian Gospels so closely resemble what Buddha taught 500 years before Christ that we are rather inclined to believe, with Garbe, that they had been simply put in the mouth of Jesus by his disciples in order to make the new religion attractive. The following cults and institutions of Christianity were also admittedly taken from Buddhism:—

(1) the monastery with monks and nuns, (2) celibacy and tensure for the clergy, (3) confession, (4) worship of relics, (5) telling of beads, (6) church towers, (7) use of incense and (9) the bell.* I do not think that the recognition of such foreign elements in the Bible and in the Christian cults affects in the least the sublime personality of Jesus or the highly ethical spirit of his teachings ; but I do believe that a larger acquaintance with such facts will purify the religion of Christ from the sectarian elements and other foreign accretions which like a hard shell hide the essence of Christianity from the eyes of her own followers. A little knowledge of ancient Indian history will also humble those conceited and narrow-minded Christian scholars who try to prove that the ideas of love towards God (Bhakti), divine grace and forgiveness of sins were borrowed by Hinduism from Christianity in the early days of the Christian mission. From a study of our pre-Christian scriptures, these missionaries will realise the historical impossibility and the psychological monstrosity of such an idea of borrowing, and also recognise

*Garbe : Indien & das Christentum.

the important principle that religious consciousness is the universal possession of mankind and that God has revealed His truths to all ages and races.

If the Christian missionaries have failed to win any considerable number of converts in India, in return for the men and money employed in this field, it is partly due to the type of religion they preach. The missionaries not only regard themselves in most cases as denizens of heaven who have descended on earth, so to speak, only to save helpless, pitiable creatures of India, but they often identify themselves with the powers that be, depreciate the virtues and capacities of the Indian people and discourage their political aspirations. The materialistic outlook and aggressive character of many of these preachers of the Gospel have often aroused the suspicion that the Christian missions might, after all, be so many institutions for advancing the commercial and political interests of the Europeans. In fact, the saying, "first comes the cross, then comes the beer and finally the flag", has become almost proverbial in some quarters. The educated Indians who cross the ocean and go over to the western

world, vividly realise the impotence as well as the impudence of these so-called servants of Christ ; for, there they find that in respect of human misery and immorality, the christendom with its slums and white slave traffic is by no means nearer heaven than the so-called "heathen" land, and that the sacred message of the Prince of peace is being constantly perverted in the Churches by the Clergymen's appeal to the brutal warlike instincts of man in the name of national honour, and by their prayer to the Almighty Father for His blessings on those weapons of destruction, which can prosper only under the un-Christian reign of the Devil. Then the vast majority of missionaries in India preach what we have called "the religion about Christ" or nominal Christianity, without caring to know or understand the true "religion of Christ." Hence it is that they are more eager to increase the number of converts than improve the quality of souls, and waste their energy extravagantly in foreign lands, while the agony of sufferings and the need of Jesus are more pressing and intensive nearer home. The way in which this nominal Christianity is preached in India is also

contrary to the religion of love taught by Jesus, because the missionaries appeal mainly and generally to the motive of fear and perpetuate the superstitious notions of heaven and hell in the minds of the simple and ignorant folk, and sometimes admit caste-rules among the converts. No wonder that for the educated community of India this degraded form of Christianity has now ceased to possess any value.

I shall now try to indicate the lines, along which the Christian religion is bound to develop if it wants to acquire a right to stay in the land of the Hindus. I have already said that the study of the religious history of India will enable the Christian missionaries to purify their religion of its superstitious belief in miracles and supernatural elements by showing them the psychological and historical genesis of the theory and practice of the deification of man. But I can go a step further and say that the life and personality of Christ will acquire a new meaning and significance, when read in the light of Indian theology and metaphysics. The personal claims of Jesus to be the only way of salvation for man or the

exclusive means of bringing about a reconciliation between the rebellious spirit of man and the holy will the divine Father, and the whole conception of a jealous God, demanding atoning blood for the supposed original and acquired sins of man in the past, present and future,—ideas which are so foreign, and repulsive to the Indian mind,—will have to be abandoned as remnants of an extinct Judaish theology. Jesus may be regarded as one of the best prophets or Sons of God (though not the best), and if the title of an “incarnation of God” has to be retained, it will not mean that Jesus serves the function of a mediator between the sinful man and the Holy Spirit of God, but that he has revealed in his life the divine character of man and held before us mortals the inspiring example of an ideal and perfect man, as Rama, Krishna, Buddha and other incarnations of the Hindus are said to have done. When Jesus speaks of being one with the Father, it will be interpreted to mean not the unity of substance or identity of being, but rather the unity of nature, of will and purpose,—a meaning according to which the sages and saints of all ages and all races

may, as some of them actually did, identify themselves with God, when they attain the blessed state of absolute effacement of their personal, individual selves and become, so to speak, 'organs or limbs in the body of God, or instruments in His hand for realising the kingdom of Heaven on earth. Thus and thus alone can Christianity remove the barriers that stand between her theology and the metaphysical principle of the unity of the individual and Brahman, which has been taught in the Vedanta and which dominates the entire life and thought of the Indian people.

Again, in our land of toleration and reconciliation the Christian missionaries will learn to recognise and appreciate the value and beauty of other religions. Just as they have learnt by experience that fanatical crusades against Saracens in the Middle ages or the burning of heretics in the days of Reformation, though once passionately supported in the name of Christianity, were due to a false conception of religion, so they will now realise in India that the mad craze for winning converts to their creed rests on a commercial view of the relation between

God and man,—a view that has been inherited by Christianity from the theology of Judaism, according to which a partial and jealous God dispenses salvation to a particular 'chosen race' in order to fulfil the terms of a sacred covenant of by-gone ages. Our Christian brethren have already recognised the idea, that "the people in the east too have their contributions to bring and that the fullness of Christian message will not be realised till great nations of the east have enriched it with their religious ideas and their way of holding and exhibiting the truth." * They have now to advance a step further and realise that just as the presence of a large number of sects and denominations does not break up the unity of Christianity, that just as the Roman Catholics, the Anglicans, Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Lutherans, the Syrians, the Armenians, and other conflicting churches, though differing in external details can yet unite in the name of Christ, so the various historical religions of the world, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mahomedanism, and Christianity are at bottom one, and lead to the same

* Mrs Creighton : "Missions" (Home University Library).

infinite God, like fellow-pilgrims wandering to a far-off temple or like streams flowing to the same ocean. They have to learn that each of these world-religions has developed a particular type of spiritual culture to suit the social environments and moral conditions of its followers, and that all of them can purify and enrich themselves by a mutual give and take of ideas, practices and institutions. Thus the Christian West has not only to import gold, silver and other mercantile commodities of India, but also her spiritual treasures, viz. her practices of meditation and communion with nature, her sense of kinship with all creatures, even with stocks and stones, her vivid god-consciousness in the individual life as well as in all the relationships of family and society, her realisation of the Infinite in the manifold activities of the finite, her "seeing God in everything and everything in God," and lastly her complete surrender of the personality of man till the individual becomes one with the Absolute, or a vehicle for the manifestation of Brahma. The Christian mission will more than fulfil its task, if it recovers in India



the original religion of Christ, and returning to the west with a richer spiritual experience, renews its vigorous activity of moulding and shaping souls after the pattern of the life of Jesus and of purging the western society of all its present evils, rather than waste its energy on foreign soils.

There is one point in common between the fates of Mother India and of Prophet Jesus, as far as their religious life is concerned. If Jesus had boldly submitted to the indignity and willingly embraced the penalty at Calvary in the fulfilment of a mission divinely entrusted to him, viz. that of bringing all mankind to the feet of one common Father and of making one family of all the races of the earth, India, too, has, I believe, taken upon herself all the rude shocks and cruel blows from the outside intruders and silently endured the sufferings and mortifications of foreign subjugation for all these centuries—only with a view to accomplish the plan of Providence, viz, that of reconciling the East with the West and synthesising all the religions of the world in a perfect harmony. It is to those Christian missionaries who devote their energy

to this glorious end,—this common mission of Jesus and India,—to those who are desirous of regenerating souls, instead of changing creeds, and who feel called upon to work in India for hastening the realisation of the kingdom God on earth, the kingdom of justice and equality, of love and purity, of patience and meekness, of beauty and joy, of mutual helpfulness and co-operation,—it is only to such missionaries and not to the preachers of nominal Christianity, that modern India will offer a hearty welcome.

X.

RELIGION AND EDUCATION.

The cause of education has always received a considerable amount of support from the leaders of all religious movements. More than one reason has contributed to this phenomenon. The spirit of proselytisation is certainly one of the motives which lead the ministers and preachers of a new religion like that of Universal Theism to take up educational works, and many of them have succeeded in reaping a rich harvest in this field. A liberal and rational religion upholding loftier and purer conceptions of God can strike deep root only in a soil where there is a high level of general culture and a wide intellectual outlook, where the combination of enlightened reason with moral courage gives people the power to fight against superstitious customs and the patience to endure the sufferings and persecutions which come to

their lot. Education therefore is the hand-maid of religion. Moreover, the influence which a teacher can exert on youthful minds in matters of morality and religion cannot be exaggerated, and in the early stages of the growth of a new religious or social movement every member of that movement considers himself to be a missionary, and every teacher of the educational institutions initiated or organised by its leaders more than supplements the works of professional preachers maintained under them. Again, the calling of a teacher or a professor appeals to the heart of all devout and earnest souls who are poor in spirit and who choose plain living and high thinking as the motto of their life. The path of an educationist is free from those corruptions which generally enter into the legal profession and also free from the precarious nature of the income which besets the path of a Doctor of medicine. The vocation of teaching gives one more leisure and more opportunity to serve one's own community and to mould the lives of the future generations of young men. Even apart from these worthy motives, every religious

body in India regards it as a sacred duty and as an important part of its philanthropic activities to spread education among the ignorant millions of this country. There is no better way of serving God, humanity and Father-land on the part of an Indian than starting schools and colleges, diffusing the light of knowledge in places where the darkness of ignorance prevails. Lastly, the social, political and economical progress of the country, which is inseparable from the growth of religious life, is largely dependent on the advancement of education and every far-sighted religious leader aiming at the perfection and all-sided development of human society needs must identify himself with the cause of education.

We may so extend our definition of education that every home and family in a society and every voluntary organisation under a religious community may be regarded as an educational institution. We are in the habit of drawing a sharp distinction between those organisations which are mainly or wholly intended for the development of moral and religious life and those that are concerned with secular education, i. e. between the

various societies and associations managed by a church or religious congregation and the schools and colleges affiliated to a University, as if we could draw a hard and fast line of division between the spiritual and secular consciousness of man, and as if the human mind were made up of water-tight compartments, between which there are no channels of communication. I have not much faith in the so-called efficiency of those spiritual institutions which do not promote the general culture of men and enable them to shine with equal glory in their secular concerns, nor do I believe in the so-called successes of those secular institutions which do not further the moral and spiritual interests as well of the individuals and of the society associated with them.

It must be admitted that there is an intimate relationship between the success of the secular educational institutions and the efficiency of the family organisations and voluntary associations connected with a religious body. We are apt to forget that, after all, even the value of secular educational institutions depends on the extent to which they

are subservient to the spiritual needs of men, and the real test for judging the merits of such institutions is to be found in the measure in which they promote the spiritual interests of society. The chief end of education is the development of character or of the qualities of head and heart which form the constituent elements of a perfected character. The examinations of a university lose all their significance and the courses of lectures delivered in schools and colleges miss their primary function, if they do not sufficiently bring home to the consciousness of each and every student the supreme inner worth and the spiritual mission of his life. Unfortunately we are still far away from that ideal order of things, in which the qualifications of a particular candidate will be judged not by the number of marks that he obtains in the various subjects he takes in his examinations, but by the inner qualities of intelligence, understanding, rational insight, clear conception of things, systematic presentation of thought, concentration, attentiveness, memory, orderliness, cleanliness, patience, self-control, purity, regularity, punctuality and other intellectual and moral virtues, of which the

answer-books in the examination hall are mere outward expressions. We may imagine that the University examinations are mere reflections in a miniature form of what is taking place on a much larger scale in the higher university of life, namely, the struggle for existence throughout the kingdom of nature. What the biologists term "natural selection" and "survival of the fittest" may not inappropriately be applied to the rational and social life of man ; and our educational institutions ought to advance towards that perfect state of things in which a candidate coming out successful in our university examinations will actually represent the type of individuality which is fittest to survive in the spiritual kingdom. I am alive to the imperfection of the analogy in so far as human souls do not perish in the struggle for existence, and as no soul is so unworthy as to become extinct, but the general validity of the principle here indicated remains, I hope, unaffected.

I propose to put forward in this paper a few practical suggestions as to the methods along which the various religious bodies in India can carry on their educational activities

in order to spiritualise our secular institutions by introducing moral and religious training in them.

There are two ways in which we can increase the efficiency of our educational activities, namely, first, we can multiply and correlate the works done by those voluntary organisations which are independent of the control of the University, so as to make them fit vehicles for the realisation of our spiritual ideals and to derive from them the maximum amount of wholesome results which they are capable of yielding; secondly, we can introduce reforms and beneficial changes in the institutions which are affiliated to the University. In both cases I would prefer to begin from the beginning. Reforms like charity should begin at home, and work from the bottom upwards. I mean, *the education of children at home from the time of their birth* through the influence of family life and social environments, and *the education of masses* through Primary and Middle Schools as well as through spectacular representations and other popular methods should engage our first and most serious attention. Did I say, "the

education of children *from the time of their birth ?*" Yes, and intentionally. I might go a step further and say, the education of children *even before their birth*. The fruit is known by the tree just as truly as the tree is known by its fruit. As is the father, as is the mother, as is the home, as is the social system, so is the child. According to the traditional Indian belief, every individual is determined with regard to his birth by his deeds in the previous life. Whatever may be the verdict of modern thought on this belief, the theory of evolution at least grants this much that the nature of a child is largely pre-determined by the long line of ancestors in its family, by the character of its parents, by the social environments in which it is brought up and so on. An educationist cannot ignore these circumstances and he must devote his energy to the task of preparing the soil, in which the seed is to be sown and the atmosphere in which the seed is to develop and fructify. An educationist must therefore be also a social reformer ; and after he has done all that is necessary for the improvement of the family and its national and social environments, as regards the housing arrangements,

sanitary and hygienic measures in towns and villages as well as the style of furniture and the art of household management among his fellow-citizens, after he has done all that is necessary for creating a healthy home, for purifying the moral atmosphere in the family and elevating the religious outlook and practices of the society, the educationist can only act as a gardener, helping in the free and spontaneous development of the child according to the laws of its own nature. Man is a domestic animal and his breeding does not differ fundamentally from that of other domesticated animals. Great care is necessary in the choice of the pairs of mates whose harmonious working will largely determine the fate of future generations. The institution of marriage must be so organised that the parties concerned may have the fullest freedom in knowing and understanding each other and have the highest spiritual training to realise the moral and social responsibilities of their wedded life ; and especially the women of our society must be emancipated from the legal, economical and other disabilities, which often compel them to

accept otherwise unsuitable partners only for the purpose of relieving themselves of the uneasy feeling of becoming a burden on their brothers' shoulder and with a view to attain a relatively independent position of the mistress of a house-hold. Lastly every parent needs to be educated in the art of creating life and in the work of rearing up children, which yields them no other profit than the sweet joy of welcoming healthy and beautiful angels on their lap.

When these preliminary family and social environments have been duly prepared, the education of a child has already been half-begun when it is still in its mother's womb. Mr. Gustav Spiller has divided moral education into three departments, home education, school education and self-education. I think this division applies equally well to all kinds of education. The education which a child receives in its mother's lap, and in the cradle during its infancy is perhaps most deeply rooted in its nature and should on that account be most carefully and scientifically directed. The different periods of the growth of a child's life require different mode of

education *e. g.* (1) from the time of birth up to the age of three years, formation of good habits should be the main object of education, (2) from the age of three years to seven years, obedience is the supreme lesson to be taught, and (3) from seven to fifteen the child requires loving chide and moral and social commendation for his actions. The formation of good habits in the child and the development of its senses and powers of observation depend largely on the intelligent interest with which the parents regulate the spontaneous, instinctive and automatic activities of the child, while it is still unconscious of itself and its family. *

The changes which the religious movements should initiate in the education of infants are nothing short of turning every home into a well-equipped school, and turning every school into a home full of love and affection. This requires a thorough reorganisation of our family and school systems and regular training for our men and women in the parental arts. It is very strange that while

* Vide Article on Education in the Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion, for most of the points touched here.

we require special experts for managing our industrial concerns and while we are keenly feeling the necessity of technical schools and training colleges for educating our young men in the various arts and handicrafts as well as the method of teaching school boys, we do not give a moment's thought to the problem of educating our future fathers and mothers in the art of creating and maintaining healthy robust, beautiful and intelligent children,—an art which is full of serious responsibilities at every step. The difficulty of the task of bringing up children in a large family and of providing them with those elements of knowledge which form materials for their future progress in schools and colleges, can be easily realised if we think that at home the children of different age, taste and temperament have to be trained by two teachers, the father and the mother, who may have different views as regards the development of the children's potentialities, and capabilities, and who had not prepared themselves adequately for the task before they were blessed with children. In most cases the parents have not sufficient leisure left to

them after the performance of their duties in their respective spheres as the earning member and the household manager of the family, and even those that have do not know how to frame time-table and devise set tasks for the children during the twenty-four hours of the day that the infant pupils have to spend in the "school" of their parents. Lastly, the parents have no ready-made guide-book for reference which may enlighten them on their subject, and they have not been through any kinder-garten school and learnt how to amuse and employ young children and treat them with cheerfulness, serenity, loving care, courtesy and respect for their liberty. I am looking forward to the day when all brides and bridegrooms in our country will be required to pass through a regular course of training in the art of managing children in a kindergarten school, or to serve as nurses or tutors, as the case may be, in a family of cultured and refined parents and well-trained children, before they enter into married life, just as all male adults in a military nation are required to serve in the army for a specific period.

In the western countries poor children of the age of three years and upward are sent to the primary schools managed by the State, and they remain there under the supervision of trained teachers and nurses who keep them employed with toys, games and songs from morning till evening while their parents are earning their livelihood as day-labourers or domestic servants or the like. We require a large number of kindergarten schools to be started in our towns and villages. As regards the subjects to be taught and the methods of instruction to be followed in these schools, I need not enter into details, as they are sufficiently indicated by the modern pedagogic textbooks. I have simply to add that the school-life and the home-life should not offer a sad contrast to the pupils, but should be so co-ordinated as to help and supplement one another. Outdoor games should be encouraged ; freedom of movement unimpeded by any restriction should be accompanied by gracefulness and propriety ; the habits of cleanliness and the art of conversation should be attended to. The various

subjects taught should have immediate reference to the physical and social environments of the children and be connected with their interest and imagination by means of apt illustrations or stories. It is because these conditions are largely fulfilled by the systems of Frœbel and Montessori that they are generally adopted in European schools.

There is one subject of vital importance which is intimately connected with the topic under our consideration, *viz.*, the moral and religious instruction of children. This is a very delicate point on which the widest divergence of opinions is possible. I have already said that no hard and fast line can be drawn between the moral and religious life and the secular life of man. Consequently, I do not believe in the possibility or desirability of imparting education to our children without developing their moral and religious consciousness at the same time, nor do I sympathise with a school for purely moral and religious instruction divorced from all relationship with the ordinary life of work and play at home and school. I regard moral and religious development or the training of

character and spiritual culture to be the aim and the culmination of all secular education, and the latter should be permeated by the ethical and religious spirit from the beginning to the end. The home and the family should provide the children with a moral and religious atmosphere, in which songs, toys, games, picture books, furniture, stories narrated, books read, amusements, the life and work of parents and other elderly relatives,—should all point towards the purity and the solemnity of life and instil into the hearts of the youngsters the spirit of self-help, self-sacrifice, devotion to duty, love to men and animals and reverence for the Father in Heaven. Similarly at school the moral tone of the lessons taught, the incidental, indirect, and direct references to the worth and dignity of moral and religious life, and the religious fervour and personality of the teacher should combine to produce a healthy spiritual mood in the children. As regards systematic moral instructions, I can only refer to the beautiful books written by Mr. F. J. Gould and other members of the Moral Education League. I believe similar

methods may be followed as regards religious instruction as well.

It is sometimes suggested by the opponents of religious instruction in schools that the introduction into young minds of the ideas of God and the soul and of the creeds and dogmas of religion concerning Heaven and Hell and pictures of future life is likely to hinder the growth of free thought and prejudice their views of life in a particular direction, and thereby produce conservatism and fanaticism on the one hand and stereotyped habits of thought and dead uniformities of action on the other. This objection certainly holds good in the case of orthodox historical religions which still breathe the spirit of dogmatism, particularism and sectarianism in so far as they are under the yoke of one prophet and one scripture supposed to be infallible for all ages and authoritative for all races. But there are universal truths of morality and religion which are acceptable to all and which may receive ever wider and richer and newer interpretation with the expanding moral and religious consciousness of man. If the doctrines of a universal and liberal religion

are also found to be narrow and sectarian and stationary, it is because truth itself has a determinate sphere of application, and has a fixity and stability following from the law of its own being. Objections of this type would prevent us from teaching even natural science and history to our boys, because facts and theories are ever changing their relation in those two spheres of knowledge with the advance of our observations and researches. To be frank, I am rather dogmatic in my conviction of the possibility and even necessity of drawing up a system of religious education for our schools and homes which would enable our boys and girls to see the loving face of our Father in Heaven, and to realise His beauty, wisdom and goodness, His providence and moral Government in all the joys and comforts of their life and in all the facts of nature and society, and which will also teach them how to pray for His help and blessings in all the details of their life, thought and action. In a word, I would like to see the day when the false view of things prevalent in modern times,—a view that looks at the various

objects of the world in their physical and material aspects alone,—would be replaced by the vision of faith which gives an insight into the real spiritual meaning and relation of things, and that not as a result of any philosophical or theological argumentations or reasonings, but in course of the natural development of the religious instinct through the early training of our children in homes and schools. The discovery or formulation of such a system of religious education requires the highest spiritual genius and the deepest religious experience, but we can prepare the way for it by drawing the attention of our educationists and ministers to its value and importance. This subject demands all the more serious consideration from our leaders because it has become a general complaint against modern systems of education that the pupils of this age do not bear on their hearts the stamp of the spiritual religion of our ancestors, and that in the absence of suitable religious atmosphere and training at home they are apt to be indifferent to their own religion and to drift backward into the sceptic and materialistic out-look of “no religion.” The

idea has got abroad that higher education on modern lines, as imparted in our colleges and in our universities, is producing a most disastrous effect on the Indian life and on its family and social organisations, for, while developing our intellect almost to a perfection, the present system of University education shakes to its foundation our ancient organisations of family and society and thus dries up the well of our spiritual life, killing as it does the religious instinct inherited from our ancestors, and blunting the moral consciousness which used to be kept alive by our time-honoured social customs and traditions. Unless we take early and vigorous measures against these tendencies by introducing systematic moral and religious instructions in our educational institutions, by reforming in the light of modern thought all our domestic ceremonies and national festivals which are still solemnly observed in every Indian home, and above all, by holding before our children personal examples of devotion, faith, love and service, as illustrated in the lives of our Rishis and Yogis, I am afraid the educational Institutions of our country will

not long survive the attitude of indifference and aversion they have already begun to evoke in our disappointed countrymen.

Next to the education of children at home, the most important task of far-reaching consequences for our country is the education of her entire rural population through primary schools and night schools, which should be completely under the control of our people. All priests and preceptors, ministers and preachers of the various religious communities in India should be instructed to start as many schools of this type as possible, and the success of their mission in life should be mainly judged by the amount of educational activities that have been initiated and furthered by them in villages. There will be no want of local men to keep up and carry on such institutions, and even the requisite funds may be largely realised from villagers in the shape of a permanent arrangement to collect rice or wheat from each family at the rate of two handfuls a day, which may be set apart by the family at the time of cooking and received by the schoolboys under the guidance of their teachers on every holiday.

What we need most at present is to awaken the spirit and to stimulate the energy to start with, to encourage and to sustain that spirit through frequent visits of our educational workers and the awarding of prizes and the supply of books and other equipments as far as possible. A central fund should be maintained by the Provincial or All-India Educational Society composed of representatives of all communities for helping the cause of such education. A list of ladies and gentlemen whose services, honorary or paid, are available for such works should be drawn up, and the whole strength of men and money should be judiciously distributed over a large number of centres. But I would prefer to see at least one good primary school in each sub-division maintained entirely by this society, so as to serve as a model to all other schools in the same sub-division. The subjects taught in such schools should be of a very useful and practical nature, having direct bearing on the daily life and future occupations of the pupils. Arrangements should be made for lectures on improved methods of agriculture, sanitation, hygiene, diet, and on

precautions to be taken in cases of epidemic diseases ; and if possible, the pupils should receive training in the art of carpentry, weaving etc., so that after having gone through the school-courses they may find themselves in a better position to earn their livelihood and serve their community. An opportunity might be given to those who have done very well in these schools and imbibed a love for knowledge and a desire to improve their lot, for continuing their education in a Technical High School, which should be started for the purpose in each district, and in workshops where they may serve as apprentices in the various handicrafts. This would produce skilled artisans in each district and revive the dying or already extinct arts and industries of the country. I may here mention that in Europe institutions of this kind are maintained by churches or by ministers of churches at their own instance, and these may easily become self-supporting, as the products of their technical departments not only supply the necessities of their pupils, staff and establishment, but bring a large profit from the market. There is, for example,

a school named "Rauhen House" in Hamburg, founded by Rev. J. H. Wichern of the German Evangelical Church, where there is a bakery, a carpentry, a laundry, a blacksmith's section, a vegetable and fruit-garden, a printing press, and a publication department attached to the institution. The pupils choose any art they like out of these varieties, and while they receive their training, the different branches are carrying on their business for the school as well as for the outside public. An experiment on this line may be tried in India.

The spread of education among the masses may be helped to a large extent by starting night schools and organising periodical exhibitions, lantern lectures, bioscopes, *ja'trás* and *kathakata's* and by other popular means. Here also we can economise our resources by organising one provincial travelling band of workers who may visit each district in turn. Nothing can educate the feelings of common people and widen the spheres of their interest and sympathy so effectively as vivid poetical descriptions, dramatic performances and

spectacular representations accompanied by music. Especially the sciences of history, botany and sociology can be most effectively taught by lantern lectures. Another valuable experiment of education is a *circulating library* of healthy popular literature, which also can be efficiently organised by the priests and preceptors. Besides we can supply vernacular journals and magazines to the teachers of primary schools and night-schools free of cost, and ask them to read out their selected contents to the illiterate masses regularly in the evening twice or thrice during the week. In towns and also in villages where there are high schools, the student community should supply us with a sufficient number of earnest voluntary workers for conducting night schools and helping us in circulating literature and announcing the important news of the day.

What I have said in connection with the primary schools and night schools applies equally to the education of males and females. Girls as well as boys, women as well as men, must be educated through such methods. Truly speaking, the need of educating girls and women is more vital and more pressing

than that of boys and men. Women are mothers of nations and to educate a girl is to educate a whole family. No amount of expenditure in this direction should be considered too much, and no increase in the number of girls' schools can be regarded superfluous at present. We must arouse in our educated women the enthusiasm for the elevation of their sisters and the spirit of making sacrifices, and of courageously facing all difficulties. We must maintain a class of female itinerant teachers who will go out and teach the zenana ladies in towns and villages. Music, painting, sewing, vegetable gardening, nursing and cooking should receive special prominence in the girls' schools. A vast store of energy is lying hidden in the heart of our widows, and once liberated by education, it will manifest itself in the form of finest types of disinterested devotion and social service. I am so fully confident in the natural beauty, simplicity, purity and devoutness of the feminine mind, that I would sow the seed of education right and left and expand our educational energy to the utmost limit in the midst of our female population, without raising the subtle

problems of efficiency and without brooking the suspicion of finding a joyless, peaceless home with an affectionless mother and with a wife whose heart has been hardened by an excessive growth of intellect.

As in the case of the education of infants, so in the case of mass education and female education, the moral and religious development of the spirit must never be lost sight of. The classes should begin with a hymn and a prayer, and the text-books selected should be in harmony with the spirit of our ideal as far as possible. So long all Government and private institutions have been engaged in teaching the wealthy and the educated classes. It is high time that they should now teach the poor and the illiterate. We have to expand our educational activities among the infants, the women and the rural population only for a decade, and the foundation of national life will be laid deep in the soil of India.

There remains another class of non-university educational institutions in the country *viz.*, the various societies, associations and congregations directly aiming at the culture of spiritual life, but substantially

contributing to and supplementing the education imparted in our schools and colleges. I mean the *moral training schools*, Students' Weekly Services, Youngmens' Associations, Theological Institutions, *Sangat Sabhàs* and places of worship, which in some form or other naturally develop, sooner or later, wherever a few devout and earnest souls congregate. I have said at the outset that it is a grave error not to be able to recognise their supreme educational importance. Through those agencies we touch the vital part of human society, and regulate the mainspring of action of the individual members, enlighten and brighten their views of life and men and things, elevate and refine their sentiments, and ennoble their moral and religious experience without their knowing it ; and yet all this is done more directly and effectively by these voluntary associations than is possible in our schools and colleges. In the history of a nation, moral and religious awakening and reforms generally precede its social, literary, political, economic and industrial revival, and that is why all patriotic leaders of the Indian nation should aim first

of all at reforming our educational system so that the moral and religious consciousness of the people may be intensely aroused, and the rest of the reforms desired by them may follow as a natural consequence therefrom. Unfortunately moral and religious education, the one thing needful for establishing the kingdom of heaven in India, is conspicuous by its absence in most of our schools and colleges. It is therefore all the more necessary that we should start institutions for moral and religious education in connection with or in the vicinity of every school and college. Again we should co-ordinate the instructions given in these spiritual institutions with those imparted in our secular ones. A good deal of the over-burdening of young brains and souls might be saved by placing both of these types of institutions in the hands of the same authorities, and treating the moral and religious instructions imparted in Sunday schools etc. as supplementary to the teaching work done in the class-rooms of our schools and colleges. Unless all the schools and colleges of our country make provision for prayer and devotional meetings, for the study

of scriptures, and discussions on spiritual life and the laws and methods of its development, young men and women of India will fail to appreciate the value and importance of moral and religious education, and consequently they will not be able to make the best use of it.

Turning to the educational institutions directly affiliated to the Universities, the reforms and improvements that I would like to see are so various and comprehensive that it would require a separate paper all by itself to discuss this problem. I have purposely refrained from mentioning what radical transformations our present University system will have to undergo before our young men can receive the right form and the right spirit of education. We can simply pave the way for some of the reforms by promoting vernacular literature in all subjects, and using it as our medium of instructions wherever possible, by introducing moral and religious education on the lines I have indicated above, by encouraging the spirit of observation and research in our institutions, by creating in our students a love of knowledge for its own sake and by holding before them

a high ideal of scholarship and character which aims at an all-round culture of their body, mind and soul. Lastly, we should recognise the inter-connection between education and practical life, between our moral, religious, social, political and economic improvements ; and we should also try to establish a cordial and friendly relation between the teachers and the taught, with a view to secure that the machine of organisation does not crush the personality of the members and hinder the growth of personal relations, but leaves ample room for fulfilling individual needs and requirements. In one word, our university education should prepare the young hopefuls of modern India for the larger *University of life* that awaits them in the world. It is by furnishing the human soul with all the necessary equipments for this wider world-university that religion and religious institutions have contributed to the education of man through all ages.

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